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**Education policy development in post-conflict contexts and its
effect on achieving sustainable peace: The Case of Bosnia and
Herzegovina**

Maida Pašić

Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Education

**Department of Education and Social Works
University of Sussex
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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be submitted, in whole or partially, to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature

Summary

In 2016, a survey of citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH) found that only thirty per cent of them believed that education plays a positive role in creating inter-ethnic trust in the country, a sobering fact for those who fifteen years earlier embarked on the education system reform as part of the internationally-lead peacebuilding process. The results were of no surprise, however, to many observers who have warned that the fragmented, segregated, and politicised education system that emerged in the aftermath of the conflict would help deepen the cleavages between Bosnia's ethnic groups and possibly reignite the conflict.

This thesis investigates the actions of International Organisations (IO) in BH's first post-conflict education reform in the period from 2001 to 2006, the time when the international community spearheaded efforts to transform the weak and deeply divided education system into an engine of the country's social and economic development. With the overall aim to gain insights into IO policymaking in post-conflict settings, the research is guided by a main question: what was the role of the international community, who managed the education reform process, in promoting reconciliation and sustainable peace through education?

Through critical reading of texts and the analysis of interviews with IO staff involved in the reform, the thesis examines the assumptions, values and ideologies that underpin IO policy choices; analyses their varied, mandate-driven approaches to the reform; considers their capacities; and explores tensions and contradictions that defined both their internal dynamics and their external relationships with national actors. In so doing, the thesis seeks to understand how IOs influenced and promoted the creation of the education system that would contribute to sustainable peace.

The research finds several problematic features of IO policymaking in BH. The delayed start of the education reform, framing of its outcomes in narrow economic terms, internal disagreements related to reform approaches and to engagement with national actors, all have diminished the potential of the IO-lead reform process to achieve peacebuilding outcomes. Nonetheless, IOs accomplished few legislative and policy successes that despite their slow uptake and implementation by national actors laid ground for better coordination and consolidation of the fragmented system.

The research resonates with several arguments from the literature concerning IO limited understanding of education's role in post-conflict social transformation and their related tendencies to exclude education issues from peacebuilding or respond to them with a

toolkit of generic, technical solutions. Notwithstanding the importance of national ownership, the research suggests that in some contexts the strong international leadership of policy development and implementation may prevent national political elites from undermining the reform process. The research also supports the claim that educational decentralisation in post-conflict settings may be problematic from the peacebuilding perspective, as it can facilitate segregation and reinforce ethnic divisions.

The research suggests that to enhance their practices IOs should frame post-conflict education reforms in terms of peacebuilding outcomes, strengthen their staff knowledge and capacity for conflict-sensitive policy and programming, and harmonize their interventions as a way to strengthen their impact on the overall peacebuilding goals.

The study proposes further research into the role of a broader group of national stakeholders in the post-conflict policymaking, including actors such as parents, teachers and principals in facilitating reconciliation and social cohesion in and through education.

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Abbreviations

BH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
COE	Council of Europe
CPA	Critical Policy Analysis
DfID	Department for International Development
DPA	Dayton Peace Agreement
EC-TAER SMS	European Commission -Technical Assistance to Education Reform, Shared Modernisation Strategy
EFA	Education for All
EISSG	Education Issue Set Steering Group
EU	European Union
FBH	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
GA	General Assembly
GEP	Global education policy
IO	International Organisation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/ Development Assistance Committee
OHR	Office of the High Representative
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PBC	Peacebuilding Commission
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PIC	Peace Implementation Council
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
RS	Republika Srpska
SFRY	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This Chapter explains the rationale, aim and significance of the research. It describes the research paradigm, presents the research questions, and lays out the organisation of the thesis.

1.1 Rationale

Ever since its emergence in the early 1990s as a key United Nations (UN) intervention in conflict-affected settings, peacebuilding has supported countries in preventing the renewal of hostilities and creating conditions for sustainable peace and development. International Organisations (IO) involved in peacebuilding are charged with complex tasks of constitutional, judicial, financial and security reconstruction of states, assisting in strengthening legitimate politics; ensuring people's security and access to justice; promoting employment generation; and strengthening service delivery (Barnett & Finemore, 2004, United Nations, 2012). The actions IOs take in that process significantly impact prospects for future peace and stability of the country.

While the policy development follows a similar trajectory in both development and post-conflict contexts, several features distinguish the two settings. Firstly, the peacebuilding process, within which policy development occurs, "is understood to be a highly political project involving the creation of a legitimate political authority that can avoid the resurgence of violence" (Tschirgi, 2004, p.9). As a result, the policy development is concerned with addressing the root causes of conflict; preventing the relapse into violence; enhancing social cohesion and rebuilding trust and legitimacy of governments (United Nations, 2012). Secondly, the policy development in post-conflict often happens in the context of severely weakened institutions and diminished national capacity for both policymaking and governance. The country may also lack democratic culture, the rule of law and respect for human rights (African Union, 2006, Hillman, 2012). Thirdly, the policy development is often lead by IOs who receive mandates from supranational bodies such as the UN, the European Union (EU) or the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) to implement the goals of the peace agreement. This leadership role of IOs is justified by the need for international actors to fill national capacity gaps as well as to play mediating role in resolving tensions and disputes between national actors in the volatile post-conflict environment. In some contexts, IOs are given explicit authority to execute

provisions of the peace agreement, guarding against relapse into violence and keeping the peace-spoilers¹ in check.

However, as critics of the current peacebuilding practice have pointed out, this direct engagement of IOs in the national policymaking often brings with it several risks. Firstly, the IOs-dominated policymaking process tends to deprive national stakeholders of ownership over their political process (De Coning 2013, Mac Ginty 2011, Novelli et al., 2014, Tschirgi, 2015). Secondly, IO policymaking is grounded in ideologically-driven premises, such as the liberal peacebuilding model, that may not be successful in fostering sustainable peace (Jabri, 2010, Paris, 2004, Pugh, 2002, Richmond, 2010). Thirdly, IOs tend to transfer generic policies and approaches applied in other settings into the post-conflict one, neglecting to contextualize their work (Novelli et al., 2014). Critics warn that without understanding of the political economy factors that shape conflict-affected contexts, the promotion of generic solutions may undermine the peacebuilding goals (ibid).

Educational decentralisation and curriculum reform are examples of generic education policies that IOs support in post-conflict settings, often with pre-conceived notions about their effectiveness and with little effort at contextualization. It is often argued that decentralisation can increase efficiency, promote democracy, foster social cohesion, and mitigate renewal of hostilities in post-conflict (Davies, 2010, Kaplan, 2009, Marc et al., 2012, Weiler, 1990). However, evidence also shows that decentralisation may have a detrimental effect on sustainable peace by facilitating elite capture at local levels resulting in the domination of one group in local government structures and fostering further cleavages between groups (Brancati, 2006, Schou & Haug, 2005, Scott, 2009). Similarly, curriculum reforms in post-conflict settings are complex undertakings that require flexibility, innovation as well as a culture-sensitive approach (Novelli et al., 2014, World Bank, 2005). Post-conflict settings may also highlight tensions between rights-based arguments, such as the recognition of minority groups' rights to be educated in their own language, and their empirical outcomes (Magill, 2010). Separate curricula, created based on constitutional provisions, may undermine social cohesion by deepening cleavages between groups and preventing reconciliation. Evidence shows the uneven success of IOs in tackling these sensitive issues (Tawil & Harley, 2004).

¹ 'Peace-spoilers' are defined in this study as those national actors who used education reform to further entrench divisions between ethnic groups and in this way continue conflict by other means. They belonged to political elites and represented the political interests of the ruling mono-ethnic parties. This study recognises that they represent only a segment of all national education stakeholders which include teachers, principals, lower level ministry staff, parents and students.

The problematic outcomes of recent peacebuilding efforts in general (Paris, 1997, Pugh, 2002), and of IO engagement in post-conflict education reforms in particular (Novelli & Smith, 2011), call for investigation of IO approaches to policy development, in particular, their understanding of education's role in peacebuilding, the appropriateness of their policy analysis and policy choices, and the strength of their staff capacity to meaningfully engage in the complex post-conflict policymaking process.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereafter, Bosnia), IOs were the architects of the first post-conflict education reform. Their role in that process is the focus of this research.

1.2 Aim and significance of research

The overall aim of this research is to investigate policymaking in the context of peacebuilding efforts in Bosnia, and the specific role IOs played in the post-conflict education reform in the period from 2001 to 2006. The study explores IO understanding of education's contribution to peacebuilding; their approaches to policy development and their ability to influence and promote the creation of the education system that contributes to sustainable peace. In doing so, the thesis seeks to understand whether and how IOs worked to influence and promote creation of the education system that would contribute to sustainable peace.

The research hopes to contribute to expanding the knowledge of UN peacebuilding processes, role of International Organisations and global education policy development. By increasing understanding of the policymaking process in post-conflict settings and the specific role of international actors in it, the research aims to inform the work of IOs involved in peacebuilding efforts and post-conflict education system reconstruction.

As an education professional working in UNICEF, I was personally interested in examining how IOs influence education policy development and practice. I was keen to better understand how IOs' work in education impacts social justice, social cohesion and supports peacebuilding in conflict-affected countries. With the view of continued professional engagement in international development, I have undertaken this research to both deepen my understanding of the education policymaking and to contribute to the work of UN and UNICEF in post-conflict education programming.

My research was also driven by a deep concern for the future of Bosnia and its children, some of whom are members of my family. Through this research I am hoping to provide those IOs currently working in Bosnia with the greater awareness of how their past actions affected the current state of education in the country, and to hopefully provoke some reflections on how they could steer their education policy and programming in Bosnia towards achievement of peacebuilding goals.

1.3 Research paradigm and questions

This study is embedded in the interpretive research paradigm that seeks to “understand the actual production of meanings and concepts used by social actors in a given context” (Rynes & Gephart, 2004, p. 457). The constructivist ontology of this paradigm assumes that diverse meanings exist and influence how people negotiate the objective world. These different meanings then produce and sustain a sense of truth (ibid.). At the same time, the epistemology of the study is transactional and subjectivist and assumes that “what can be known is inextricably intertwined with the interaction between a particular investigator and a particular object or group” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 110).

My choice of research paradigm was influenced by the subject of the study. As I undertook to understand the dynamic process of policy development, I was inevitably engaged in questioning the assumptions, values and ideologies of IO policymakers. I focused on exploring how different IO representatives understood and engaged with the policy reform process and how their understanding of Bosnian political, social and cultural context as well as the purpose and role of education in reconciliation, influenced the choices they made and actions they took.

To study the role of IOs in the education policymaking process, I chose the instrumental case study method that is generally used to provide insights into an issue or help to refine a theory (Stake, 1995). Two research methods were deemed especially suitable for this study: semi-structured interviews and a documentary review. The selection of these methods was guided by the purpose of the research, its design and methodology.

The main research question (RQ) that framed my inquiry asks: *what was the role of the international community, who managed the education reform process, in promoting reconciliation and sustainable peace through education?*

The following sub-research questions further guided the study:

Sub-RQ 1: What were the key features of IOs involvement in Bosnia's first post-conflict education reform?

Sub-RQ 2: Whether and how did IOs seek to embed peacebuilding outcomes in the education reform process?

Sub-RQ 1 sought to understand the key players' roles in the education reform process, their assumptions and expectations in development of the reform strategy and their internal dynamics and interactions, including competing interests, tensions and contradictions. The Sub-RQ2 sought to understand whether the IOs engaged in the

reform process, recognised the risk that the education system may undermine prospects for sustainable peace, and if and how they tried to mitigate that risk.

1.4 Limitations of the study

The scope of this study is limited to eight IOs who led or played an active role in the reform process from 2001 to 2006. The study does not include the broader international community of actors such as International NGOs as its focus is on the leadership in the reform and those IOs who were directly involved in the policymaking process. The criteria for selection of informants to be interviewed required that they worked with one of the eight IOs and spent a minimum of one year in Bosnia engaging in the reform. For this reason, staff of two IOs, UNHCR and the World Bank, were not interviewed as it was not possible to identify informants that fit the criteria.

While the role and influence of national stakeholders, especially the policymaking elites on the reform process is discussed in the study, due to its scope, the research did not include interviews with representatives of education authorities at the state, Federation or RS levels.

Finally, while the current state of education in Bosnia is briefly described, the study does not include substantial analysis of the reform implementation results due to its focus on the policy development process.

1.5 Organisation of the thesis

The thesis is organised into seven Chapters, as follows:

Chapter One (this Chapter) presents the rationale, aim, methodology and questions of this research. Chapter Two reviews several bodies of literature that informed this research and provided theoretical framing for the analysis of the education reform process in post-conflict Bosnia. Chapter Three explores the historical and political context of the Bosnia's education reform, demonstrating the pertinence of this specific country case in answering my research questions. Chapter Four describes the research paradigm, methodology and methods used and gives insights into my research journey. Chapter Five analyses the findings from the research as they relate to Research Question 1. Chapter Six analyses the findings from the research as they relate to Research Question 2. Chapter Seven discusses and sums up the findings of the research, identifies the contribution to the field of study and offers recommendations for policy, practice and future research.

Chapter 2: Literature underpinning Conceptual Framework

Chapter 2 reviews several bodies of literature that informed this research and provides the theoretical framing for the analysis of the education reform process in post-conflict Bosnia. It is divided into three sections. Section 2.1 introduces the concepts of policy, policy analysis and global education policy transfers and examines the role of the state and that of international organisations. Section 2.2 reviews the concept and practice of peacebuilding, highlighting major critiques and proposed models for strengthening the peacebuilding process. It further describes the specific contribution of education to ensuring sustainable peace. Section 2.3 concludes the literature review by examining the key features of education policy development in the context of the peacebuilding process. Section 2.4 summarises key findings of the literature review and presents the conceptual framework that guided this research.

2.1 Education Policy

2.1.1 Definitions: Policy and Policy Analysis

The complex and contested nature of policy is evident in many definitions found in the literature. Policy is understood as an outcome of the government's intent to respond to specific social problems; as a piece of legislation; or as a desired state of affairs. It is seen as "both text and action, words and deeds, it is what is enacted as well as what is intended" (Ball, 1994, p.10). Recognizing the importance of context in which policy is made and the presence of power in policymaking, policy is also defined as an "authoritative allocation of values" (Kogan, 1975, quoted in Bell & Stevenson, 2006, p.15).

Policy is not only a product but also a process with often difficult to define beginnings and endings (Bell & Stevenson, 2006). Policy development includes agenda setting, policy formulation and policy implementation, which are not sequential but concurrent processes that dynamically interact. From the perspective of 'policy as discourse' theorists, policy production is not an objective and rational exercise based on the problems that exist. Rather, they argue, 'problems' are produced within policy discourse, and the way they are produced has political implications (Bacchi, 2010).

In this study, policy is understood as both product and process that is highly contested and complex (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard & Henry, 1997). Policy is about power to determine what should be done, who benefits, for what purpose, and who pays (Bell & Stevenson, 2006). Policy is often contradictory, its makers and its implementers interpret its content differently, so "a single 'policy' may be better

understood ... as a plurality of policies that emerge and develop as the policy process moves from formulation to implementation" (Bell & Stevenson, 2006, p. 23). While the study understands policy as an authoritative allocation of values, it recognizes the need to question whose authority and whose values are represented through policies and how, where and when they are made (Robertson, 2012).

Policy analysis, as a study of policy and policy development, provides analytical models that help us understand policy purposes, development and methods. Approaches to policy analysis can roughly be divided into rationalist and critical. The rationalist approach, based on a positivist methodology and pluralist perspective, outlines several sequential steps in the policymaking process. An example is Jennings's (1997) linear model (referenced in Rizvi & Lingard, 2010) that includes initiation, reformulation of opinion, emergence of alternatives, discussion and debate, legitimization and finally, implementation. The problem that policy is trying to solve is taken as a given. Who framed the problem is rarely asked. The rationalist approaches dominated early years of policy analysis (1950-1980s) and reflected a consensus that "government intervention was both desirable and necessary for solving the social problems" (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p.2).

Since then, several new approaches to analysis have emerged, reflecting the complexity of policy development processes in the new era of multiple actors, competing values and sources of influence. Taylor et al. (1997) developed an analytical framework that analyses policy from the perspective of the context (what are the political, economic and social factors that give rise to the policy?), text (how is it articulated, framed? what values does it reflect?) and consequences (how is it implemented?). Expanding on this framework, Bell and Stevenson (2006) included additional four elements into their policy analysis tool. These were: the sociopolitical environment from which policy is derived based on the dominant discourse; the strategic direction which defines policy and establishes its success criteria; organizational principles which set implementation parameters; and operational practices, which translate policy into institutional procedures and action plans (ibid., p.13).

In line with my conceptualization of policy, this study uses Rizvi and Lingard's Critical Policy Analysis (CPA) to interrogate the policy development process in post-conflict Bosnia. CPA views policy development as a dialectic process in which stakeholders' competing values and differential access to power seek to form and shape policy in their own interests. CPA focuses on the outcomes of policy but also on the broader issues of who determines the policy and for whom. CPA also pays attention to the site of policy production (global, national, local); considers different social imaginaries, ideologies,

assumptions of policymakers; takes a policy problem as historically constructed, rather than 'given'; insists on critical reflexivity and awareness of researcher's positionality and is focused on rationality and interconnectivity of policy developments (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). Finally, CPA offers a critique of assumptions built implicitly or explicitly into any given policy with a view of showing how they may either support or undermine the values of democracy and social justice (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). In this regard, CPA resonates with the aim of this study which is to understand the dynamic process of policy development, through questioning the assumptions, values, and ideologies of the IO policymakers; their understanding of Bosnia's political, social and cultural context as well as the purpose and role of education in reconciliation and social cohesion.

Policy analysis in the context of this study is linked to the local, regional and global processes. The Bosnia's education reform and the policy development it entailed, occurred in the context of an international peacebuilding effort, involving multiple actors. While the reform process was locally owned, the IOs inevitably brought in global and regional perspectives into the process. The next section looks at the phenomena of global education policy transfers in order to examine those influences.

2.1.2 Global Education Policy

Global education policy (GEP) represents a set of similar policy solutions to educational problems which are globally discussed, constructed and adopted by a wide variety of nations with different social, historical and economic characteristics (Verger et al., 2012). 'Global' in this context denotes a policy connection above the national, but still interconnected to regional, national and local policy spaces (Lingard, Rawolle & Taylor, 2005).

While globalization may have intensified research and debates on GEP, policy transfers across countries are not a new phenomenon. Borrowing and learning have been major means through which countries influenced each other's education systems for decades (Dale, 1999, Steiner-Khamisi, 2012). What distinguishes GEP today is the way in which policies are made and transferred. While borrowing and learning have always been voluntary and initiated by the recipient country, the new mechanisms - described by Dale (1999) as harmonization, dissemination, standardization, installing interdependence and imposition - have an external locus of viability, draw on a broader range and forms of power and cannot be directly sourced to other individual nations (p.1). Today, policies are transferred through persuasion, collective agreements, leverage, and conditions for membership or required alignment of national policies with international standards (ibid.). Describing new policy transfers, Steiner-Khamisi (2012) notes that "the pre-existence of global reform packages disseminated, and sometimes funded by global actors, suggests

a sequence that is at odds with what is typically assumed in policy planning: local problems are sometimes created in line with packaged global solutions, rather than the other way around" (p. 6).

GEP is created and transferred through the dynamic interaction between the state, its central, regional, and local institutions, and regional and global actors. The latter two are external but nowadays highly integrated into national policy development processes. To understand these dynamics, the role of the state and the role of IOs in global education policy development is examined in more detail next.

Role of the state

Any analysis of policy development processes inevitably starts with the role of the state, traditionally the principal purveyor of the education policy. Education represents an important link between the state and its citizenry. The state's responsibility to secure the right of all citizens to an education is central to the social contract (GMR, 2011). Historically, education has played an essential role in the development of the modern nation-state² through supporting economic development and through helping forge the sense of shared national identity (Engel, 2009). The state – understood as the apparatus of "specifiable publicly funded institutions" at national and sub-national levels (Dale, 1989 quoted in Bell & Stevenson, 2006, p. 27)– influences education policy development in several ways. From the pluralist perspective, the state's essential function is to arbitrate a variety of values and positions that exist amongst different interest groups in a society, to arrive at a given policy through a democratic process. The state gains legitimacy by maintaining that democratic process. This perspective highlights the power dynamics that exist in the competitive process and acknowledges that there is unequal opportunity within the society that allows some to exert more influence over the final content of the policy than others (Bell & Stevenson, 2006).

In his seminal work, Claus Offe (1996) argues that states use the public education system for two main functions – capital accumulation and state legitimation. Public education systems help create human capital needed to sustain economic growth, thus ensuring capital accumulation, while simultaneously creating a sense of national identity, building social cohesion and legitimating sense of unity between citizens. From this perspective, state influences education policy development to achieve the outcomes of legitimation and accumulation.

² Nation-state is defined in this study as a state whose citizens are a relatively homogenous cultural and linguistic group (a nation). State is defined in this study as an organized political community under one government, that may contain one or more nations.

Against the background of globalisation, the two functions of the state, however, have been influenced by the growing role of supranational, regional, and subnational actors and structures. The role of the nation-state in education appears to have shifted, particularly as national education systems around the world face significant supranational pressures on the development of education policy and seek to reconcile these with local and regional traditions and priorities (Engle, 2007).

While some see GEP agenda as limiting national policy debates (Henry et al., 2001), generally, researchers agree that states still have some authority over their own policy. They note, however, that even if they are still articulated in nationally-specific terms, the processes that frame education policy are often constituted globally and beyond the nation-state (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). Verger et al. (2012) contend that through de-territorialisation of the education policy process, the 'national' territory is losing its centrality, while Robertson (2012) argues that national-states are not diminished but that external players such as IOs transform the "state-form". For Robertson de-territorialisation of the education policy development implies "the redefinition of the scale, the space and the dynamics through which education policy is being negotiated, formulated and implemented" (Verger et al., 2012, p. 6).

At the same time, several writers emphasize that we cannot look at the global policymaking as a top-down process of external/global imposing on internal/local but rather recognise its dialectical nature in which global policy is qualified and mediated by local actors and structures (Ozga & Lingard, 2007, Robertson, 2012, Steiner-Khamsi, 2012). Dale (2005), similarly, cautions against seeing 'globalisation vs the nation-state' as a zero-sum game. Verger et al. (2012) point to the need to transcend global-local binary by recognizing that "many state components (ministries, departments) and the bureaucrats operating within the state are networked or, at the same time, part of IOs (usually identified as the 'global' level)" (p.8).

Engel (2009) notes that as the state negotiates these global and supranational pressures 'from above', new modes of education governance are being produced, which place greater importance on local and regional scales in terms of the direction of policy development. These new modes of governance, as noted by Robertson, Bonal, and Dale (2002) "are recognizable at the current time as strategies such as devolution, centralization, regionalization, decentralisation, internationalization, and so on" (p. 476).

The implications of these observations for the research is well articulated by Robertson and Dale (2008), who caution against methodological nationalism (that privileges the nation-state) and methodological globalism (that privileges global actors). Similarly,

researchers have called for a new methodological approach to studying education policy development "that neither reifies nor privileges local, national or global geographical scales and instead seeks to develop a framework for understanding the complex relationships between scales and interrogates multi-scalar relationships" (Novelli, Lopes Cardoso & Smith, 2015, p. 8).

The insights on the new and transformed role of the state are critically important for the analysis of the post-conflict setting. In the aftermath of the conflict, the investment in education is an opportunity for the state to once again deliver on its core functions: create basis for economic growth (accumulation) and unify its citizenry, gaining in this way legitimacy in the eyes of the population (legitimation).³ The post-conflict setting, however, brings specific challenges for the state to maintain those functions as well as to ensure social cohesion. Much like it was pointed out by Bonal (2003) that accumulation and legitimation goals may at times be at odds – for example when the state is unable to expand education to all its citizens - the weakened state in the post-conflict setting may struggle to regain the control over its education system. Smith (2011) finds this situation in Lebanon where the private system substituted the collapsing public system, and the state wrestled with reestablishing its authority through regulation of both private and public systems, curricular reform and the promotion of social cohesion. Somalia is another case in point where the absence of a central education authority rendered any policy development and legitimation of reforms impossible and left national players scrambling to support the education system through largely unsustainable and uncoordinated interventions (Novelli, Higgins, Ugur & Valiente, 2014). The case of Bosnia is also an example where local power structures in a decentralised system worked to further weaken the state and competed for legitimacy in the eyes of the citizens.

Despite these insights from the literature, there seems to be little research on the challenges of policy development in post-conflict settings, both in terms of state's relation to its sub-national structures, as well as to external players such as the IOs. This study examines some of those tensions.

Role of International Organisations (IOs)

While there are many classifications, the following simple categorisation distinguishes between two types of IOs:

³ Domestic legitimacy refers to the acceptance of post-conflict interventions and resulting institutions among the local population (Fisk et al., 2011).

- Intergovernmental organizations, (IGOs), which are the focus of this study, are "unions of nation-states joined together to tackle similar domestic and foreign policy issues at the international level" (Shahjahan, 2012, p. 369). IGOs include multilateral organizations such as the United Nations and its Funds and Programmes, the World Bank Group, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Council of Europe (COE), and the International Labour Organization (ILO).

IGOs also include bilateral organizations such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), who receive funding from their home country government to be used for projects in a developing country. This study deals mainly with the multi-lateral intergovernmental organisations, referred to as IOs (see Section 3.6.2 for the list of IOs included in this study).

- International nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) are non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that operate internationally. They include, for example, Save the Children, World Vision, Norwegian Refugee Council and International Committee for the Red Cross.

IOs are key vehicles for transferring global education policies, defining education reform priorities, and leading and financing reforms in countries around the world. IOs play a discursive role by introducing to policymakers their policy texts, national reports, and statistics and by offering recommendations based on what they consider good practices in educational development (Shahjahan, 2012). As networkers and coordinators of global policy exchanges, IOs create space for global policy discourse, the space that includes governments but increasingly also transnational corporations, regional organizations, accreditation bodies, and other nation-states. Through the international knowledge banks containing statistics on national educational systems, IOs develop "spaces of equivalence" (Shahjahan, 2012, p.381) through which states compare themselves to specific benchmarks aligned with particular policy outcomes. This particular role of "classifying the world" (Barnett & Finnemore, 1999, p. 710), is criticised by many who see these classifications systems as vehicles for promoting neoliberal ideology tied to market reform and human capital development (Robertson, 2009). The standardised tests such as Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) are cases in point, serving to create urgency and justification for the adoption of global reforms (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012).

The power of IOs lies in their rational-legal authority. As Barnett and Finnemore (1999) explain, “this authority is “rational” in that it deploys socially recognized relevant knowledge to create rules that determine how goals will be pursued” (p. 707). The power of IOs also lies in their ownership of information and expertise, and their financial power (ibid.). However, the IOs are not created equal; they differ in their ideology and means through which they exert power (i.e. expertise, field presence, money). They also differ in the role they play in international development which may include supplying technical assistance, financing development projects or leading the emergency response. Furthermore, IOs may not be a coherent group internally. There is often internal disjunction between official positions of an organization and their actual practices (Verger et al., 2012).

The extent of IO influence on national policymaking varies from one socio-political and institutional context to another. In high-income countries, IOs generally play a peripheral role in framing national policy options, with their annual data and statistics reports often used to initiate policy discussions. At the same time, international assessment frameworks such as TIMSS and PISA, are regarded by high-income countries as essential indicators of system performance and valid and reliable instruments for international benchmarking of system changes (Beakspear, 2012). On the other hand, IO work has a strong salience in education reforms of developing countries. There, the extent of IO influence is determined by the institutional, human and financial capacity of individual education systems to mediate or ameliorate the effects of global pressures. In the great number of countries, however, the IOs can directly influence education agendas, define the education reform priorities as well as impose policies through funding mechanisms and aid conditionality (Verger et al., 2012).

The peacebuilding platform set up in the aftermath of a conflict is primarily lead by the international actors. The IOs such as the UN, IMF and OSCE are entrusted with constitutional, judicial, financial or security reconstruction, ‘in essence remaking the whole states” (Barnett & Finnemore, 2004, p. 2). A useful classification of key international players in the peacebuilding process distinguishes between:

- a. international development sector, which includes UN agencies, (I)NGOs and donors and focuses on achievement of SDG goals;
- b. humanitarian sector, which includes humanitarian agencies and (I)NGOs and focuses on providing humanitarian response during and post-crisis; and
- c. security sector, which includes UN agencies but also military and foreign service actors and focuses on peacebuilding, state-building and global security. (Novelli et al., 2014, p. 36-37)

In their analysis of the mandates, capacities and powers of IO players, Novelli et al. (2014) find that the education agenda features strongly in the development sector but less so in the security and humanitarian sectors, the two that seem to dominate post-conflict peacebuilding processes. As a result, the IO staff engaged in humanitarian response or state-building and security often have no professional background or technical capacity in education. Furthermore, studies, such as the one conducted by Novelli and Smith (2011) on UNICEF, have shown that even the staff of IOs traditionally involved in the education sector find it difficult to understand the complex relationship between education and peacebuilding, and lack capacity in political economy and conflict-analysis approaches to their programming. This has direct implications for how different IOs involved in peacebuilding may approach education policy development.

In examining their engagement in policy development, this study looks at the specific issue of IO staff capacity. In this regard, two factors are considered – the length of the presence of IO staff in a country and their professional backgrounds. The short vs long term presence approach is often the matter of organisational choices, funding priorities and understanding of the purpose of international technical assistance (TA). Indeed, there is an on-going debate amongst practitioners on what constitutes the most effective type of TA. Traditionally donors have sponsored long-term technical support to national partners in the form of expatriate experts (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/ Development Assistance Committee [OECD/DAC], 2009). However, in recent years that practice has been questioned on the grounds that this type of TA may undermine national capacity developments as international become replacement for local actors (OPM, 2003). As a result, donors are increasingly opting for the provision of short-term technical assistance that avoids substitution (Governance and Social Development Research Center [GSDRC], 2009). At the same time, research by some IOs indicate that short-term technical assistance may not be the most appropriate approach in dealing with complex issues of policy reform, change management, and capacity-building, and advise against it (Asia Development Bank, 2007). In the fragile post-conflict setting the latter may be particularly well-placed advice.

Related to this is the issue of professional background and technical capacity of IO staff engaged in post-conflict education reforms. The literature on TA is again instructive. The most common criticism of international TA is that insufficient attention is given to ensuring that the expert personnel deployed to countries have the necessary skills (including interpersonal skills and the ability to transfer knowledge) to be able to engage effectively in demanding change processes (GSDRC, 2009). This calls for the reassessment of approaches IOs use in the selection of staff assigned to work on policy development in

post-conflict. This study will examine the consistency, appropriateness and continuity of technical support provided by IOs in Bosnia as a way of understanding how these factors may have influenced the policy development process.

Finally, as Lederach (1997) notes “an infrastructure for peacebuilding should be understood as a process-structure made up of a web of people, their relationships and activities, and the social mechanisms necessary to sustain the change sought” (p. 84). Indeed, in the peacebuilding process, IO work is defined and shaped by the dynamic interaction with the national actors. With neither side able to act autonomously (Mac Ginty, 2010), IOs strategies are contested, distorted, and reshaped by the national actors. While it does not examine the role of national stakeholders specifically, this study reflects on the interactions between IOs and national actors as they influenced, facilitated or limited the policy development process.

2.1.3 Section Summary

Education policy development involves a dynamic process in which stakeholders' competing values and differential access to power seek to influence both the process and the product that is eventually an education policy. Global education policy transfers define the education policymaking environment today. Education policy development is no longer within the exclusive purview of the nation-state. It is influenced by global, regional and national developments and by IOs who are the primary transmitters of the global policy discourse. This is particularly true for post-conflict settings where international players converge to influence reconstruction of a war-torn society, bringing in their diverse mandates, capacities and levels of influence.

2.2 Education Policy Development in Post-Conflict

Education policy development and reform are complex tasks for any country but are particularly daunting for those emerging from a violent conflict, who undertake the tasks in the conditions of weakened human, institutional and financial resources (World Bank, 2011). The international support in this context is welcomed, but at the same time may make countries vulnerable to external control, imposition of policies that create dependency, or do more harm than good for the prospect of sustainable peace. The post-conflict policy development is inextricably linked with the peacebuilding process as was in the case in Bosnia. The following sections review the peacebuilding practice and the role of education within it.

2.2.1 Peacebuilding

Definitions

Peacebuilding entered the international discourse and practice in the early 1990s with the publication of the United Nation's *Agenda for Peace*, which defined it as “an action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict” (United Nations 1992, para 1.21). As the practice of peacebuilding evolved over time, its UN definition has become more precise and instructive, stating that “peacebuilding involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development” (United Nations 2010, p. 5). Subsequently, the UN articulated five goals of peacebuilding as legitimate (inclusive) politics; people's security; access to justice; employment generation and livelihoods support; accountable revenue management; and service delivery (United Nations, 2012). The theory of change that underpins the efforts to achieve these goals calls for:

- addressing drivers and root causes (e.g. horizontal inequalities);
- building institutions and capacities of individuals, communities and authorities to manage conflict and deliver services (e.g. political, security, justice and government institutions that deliver social services);
- enhancing social cohesion and trust among social groups (e.g. reconciliation processes); and
- building trust in and legitimacy of governments (e.g. political dialogue) (Peacebuilding Fund [PBF], 2018).

The UN definition of peacebuilding drew on the theoretical conceptions of peace, violence and conflict contained in the works of Johan Galtung and John Paul Lederach. Galtung coined the term ‘peacebuilding’ in his 1976 work *Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding*. There, he put forward the notion of ‘positive peace’, defined as the absence of structural and cultural violence and prevalence of justice and equality. Lederach (1997) suggested that peacebuilding is a transformational process that “encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships” (p. 20).

Other authors emphasize that given the multidimensional causes of wars, peacebuilding likewise needs to address political, economic and social aspects of reconstruction and reconciliation (Keating & Knight, 2004, p. xxxiii). Anderson (2004) further identifies several features and operational principles of peacebuilding including its multidimensional character; its long-term nature; its predication on security; the need for peacebuilding to foster local ownership and local capacity building as well as to include

all actors acting according to the "do no harm" principle. The next section reviews how the peacebuilding, conceptualized along all these lines, has been operationalized in practice. Given that Bosnia has been the place of international peacebuilding effort since 1996, the following insights from the literature are directly relevant for the research.

Critiques

Examining the peacebuilding process in different settings, theorists have generated several important critical observations about its nature and practice, which can be divided into two groups: the critical literature that questions the core ideological and normative assumptions of peacebuilding, and the problem-solving literature that accepts the core assumptions and focuses on deficiencies in the implementation in various country contexts (Pugh, 2013, Tschirgi, 2015).

The critical literature sees peacebuilding as a neoliberal project that emphasizes security and politics over development; institutions over processes and ready-made template solutions over adaptations to the local social and cultural context (Anderson, 2004, Call & Collin, 2015, Novelli & Smith, 2011, Paris, 2004, Pugh, 2002, Richmond, 2010). Authors in this group argue that, as currently conceptualized and practised, peacebuilding serves to promote Western values of political and economic liberalization (Jabri, 2010, Paris, 2004, Pugh, 2002, Richmond, 2010). Paris articulates this situation through the *liberal peace thesis*. The idea is that if the conflict-affected states manage to successfully develop and maintain a functional democracy, they will then become part of the wider family of interdependent democracies around the world and have more chances for peace, security and economic growth (Paris, 2004, Tziarras, 2012). For liberal peacebuilding to succeed, the priority becomes achieving security through cessation of hostilities (negative peace) and introducing social sector reforms that will promote the development of market economy (Chandler, 2004, Verger et al., 2012). For Paris (2004), then, "peacebuilding missions are not merely exercise in conflict management, but instances of a much larger phenomenon: the globalization of a particular model of domestic governance—liberal market democracy—from the core to the periphery of the international system" (p. 638).

Examining eleven cases of peacebuilding operations in the 1990s, Paris concludes that in most cases, political or economic liberalization produced destabilizing side effects that worked against the consolidation of peace (Paris, 1997). For example, he maintains, stirring competition that is central to the operation of the liberal market economy as well as democratic electoral process, in the context of war-shattered states, is problematic (ibid.). Given the recent conflict past, and states' weakened institutions, Paris (1997) concludes that "in these circumstances, efforts to transform war-shattered states into

market democracies can serve to exacerbate rather than moderate societal conflict” (p. 57).

Another problem that critics find with the liberal peacebuilding approach is its tendency to emphasize the economic and political liberalization over the social aspects of peacebuilding, thus overlooking “the social and human consequences of the process of constructing that peace” (Pugh, 2002). For example, Novelli and Smith (2011) find that only 25 out of 192 projects funded by the PBF created by the UN to support implementation of various peacebuilding interventions, were related to social services. Yet, the restructuring of the society and securing peace through strictly political and economic means fails to address the underlining causes of violence and conflict and to promote reconciliation. Yordan (2003) notes that the tendency of equating peacebuilding with state-building is subsequently diminishing the social aspects of the peacebuilding process.⁴ Examining Bosnia’s case, he observes that the state-building efforts have not been able to foster more cooperation between groups or to transform people’s attitudes and have in fact made reconciliation between the groups difficult to achieve (Yordan, 2003). The argument here is that the fundamental features of reconciliation lie in the social processes, so the focus on the political and economic realms is insufficient to generate conditions for long-term peace. Yordan (2003) suggests a two-track approach that involves both state-building and society-building, the latter aimed to “empower people at the grassroots and middle social level to interact with each other and address the causes that led the communities to war” (p. 65).

Some authors maintain that the emphasis on politics and security in peacebuilding processes is reflective of the structure of the UN system. From that perspective, Call and Collin (2015) note that “peace operations reflect the peace and security mandate of the Security Council, and its institutional expressions reinforce the emphasis in UN peacebuilding conversations and priorities on political processes, the rule of law, and justice and security institutions” (p. 6). They note that in recent years some efforts have been put in place to moderate the emphasis on security issues especially through the work of the Peacebuilding Commission that brings security and development issues into dialogue within the UN system (ibid).

⁴ GMR 2011 offers useful differentiation between the two: “Peacebuilding involves looking beyond the immediate cessation of conflict to address the root causes of violence, create stability and establish mechanisms for managing conflict without recourse to violence (DFID, 2010 a). It is about governments generating confidence, trust and engagement among citizens. State-building is a different but related exercise. It is about creating the systems of governance and institutions that provide the security, justice, basic services, and the systems of representation and accountability upon which the legitimacy of the state ultimately depends (OECD-DAC, 2010h; Whaites, 2008)” (UNESCO, 2011, p. 222).

The second set of criticism coming from the problem-solving camp is related to the claim that the current peacebuilding practice fails to adapt itself to the specific context of the post-conflict societies and to recognize the importance of local ownership and promoting grassroots changes. Tschirgi's (2004) observes that since the early 1990s "external actors began to develop a peacebuilding template and a package of standard remedies to be applied in different contexts" (p. 5). Similar claim is made by Mac Ginty (2014) that "peacebuilding activity and discourse has been standardized and professionalized through 'best practice' and 'lessons learned' (p. 551). In the mainstream peacebuilding, critics further contend, "local ownership amounts to local acceptance of schemes conceived, funded and managed from the outside (perhaps with the assistance of local or national elites)" (ibid). De Coning (2013) warns that the external peacebuilders "deny these (post-conflict) societies the room to develop their own institutions which are emerging from their own history, culture and context" (p. 5).

Much of the peacebuilding practice promotes the idea that 'expertise' is exogenous and that local actors are passive recipients who lack the agency to act (Mac Ginty, 2014). Here, according to Andersen (2005), lies the inherent contradiction of peacebuilding processes with "on the one hand, the notion that the transition process needs to be locally owned. On the other, a fixed agenda of liberal democracy and market economy prevails" (p. 17). These perspectives, however, assume that the local agency is always for good and neglect to reflect on the potential of local actors to subvert efforts to promote reconciliation and social cohesion.

National ownership is a core principle of international engagement in conflict-affected countries and the key element of peacebuilding success (Bennaars, Huda & Mwangi, 1996, Novelli et al., 2014, Shah, 2012). While conceptually it is clear that the political, social, and economic transformations that peacebuilding aims to attain inherently depend on the support and commitment of domestic actors, observers point out that it is less obvious how national ownership should be operationalized and what role international actors should play in it (Donais, 2014). As noted earlier, the IO dominance in the national policymaking in post-conflict settings is seen as particularly problematic as it may undermine the state's ability to regain legitimacy. Furthermore, critics contend that in their state-centric approaches to peacebuilding IOs tend to either exclude local actors and the civil society from the policy dialogue or engage with the local elites who are often responsible for the conflict or its perpetuation (O'Driscoll, 2018). These perspectives call for IOs to play a supportive role, allowing local actors to make decisions on solutions appropriate for them (Mac Ginty, 2014, Novelli et al., 2014).

While undoubtedly any effort to develop policy in post-conflict settings must be grounded in local realities and involve national stakeholders, these critiques miss the complexity of those situations where national actors actively engage in disrupting the peacebuilding process and prevent or co-opt self-initiative by the civil society and other local actors. The active involvement of external actors can, in these cases, minimize the effect of anti-peace, anti-progress spoilers (Perry, 2003). In the cases where decentralisation has been part of the post-conflict process, evidence shows that the local democracy may be more vulnerable to political capture when restraints and accountability measures are absent (World Bank, 2011). This situation can reinforce or create elites who use devolved power to pursue their interests to the detriment of both local and national interests (ibid.). Reflecting on the OECD/DAC Principle 7 of good international engagement in fragile states and situations, which calls to 'align with local priorities in different ways in different contexts' (OECD/DAC, 2007), Magill (2010) questions "desirability of aligning with local priorities in a context where local actors are often sceptical, if not openly critical, of reform initiatives aimed at creating a more inclusive and integrated education system" (p.54).

As Perry (2003) notes "there also appears to be a trade-off between locally-owned processes that fail to facilitate change in a timely manner, and externally imposed processes that, while potentially more expedient, may not in themselves provide the basis for a model of the democratic process" (p. 18). In these circumstances the IOs may find themselves in a conundrum: to intervene and (undemocratically) impose their directions in policymaking or stay on the margins and witness adoption and implementation of policies that may be undermining the prospect for sustainable peace. Theorists and practitioners alike, concerned with the effectiveness of the current peacebuilding operations, suggest several approaches to improve both their conceptualization and their practice. Some alternative approaches to the peacebuilding practice are reviewed next.

Proposed new models

Addressing the perceived failure of the top-down design of the current peacebuilding practice, several authors argue for the emphasis on promoting internal social resilience and reducing interference of the external actors. Mac Ginty (2014), focusing on local actors, notes that the boundaries between social groups are not fixed but fluid, that groups are heterogeneous and that there is a wide range of intensity of affiliation within a single group. These observations lead him to promote the idea of an everyday peace (everyday diplomacy) defined as "the practices and norms deployed by individuals and groups in deeply divided societies to avoid and minimize conflict and awkward situations at both inter- and intragroup levels" (2014, p. 553). Along the same lines, De Coning's

(2016) complexity theory-informed approach calls for "more pluralistic bottom-up, or hybrid, conflict management approaches that do not have the ambition to resolve conflict, but instead invest in the resilience of local social institutions to prevent, cope with and recover from conflict, i.e. to sustain peace" (p. 167). The role of international actors then is only to facilitate the process, since much interference may undermine the self-organizing processes necessary to sustain resilient social institutions (ibid). For peace consolidation to be self-sustainable, it has to be the result of a home-grown, bottom-up and context-specific process. The robustness and resilience of the self-organising capacity of a society determines the extent to which it can withstand pressures and shocks that risk a (re)lapse into violent conflict (De Coning, 2013).

This approach, however, does not sufficiently explain how the marginalized populations would be included in the reconciliation processes, nor reflects on how the local political interests to maintain the conflict, would be moderated. As Bush and Saltarelli (2000) note, the local context can produce abundance of anti-peace, anti-progress spoilers and the stronger role of the external actors may be critical to mitigate against these forces. While the emphasis of this approach on the societal aspects of the peacebuilding process is positive, it does not sufficiently address all the challenges of the post-conflict social transformation.

Seeing current 'rapid democratization and marketisation' approaches to peacebuilding as detrimental, Paris (2004) proposes 'institutionalization before liberalization' model which requires a gradual and controlled peacebuilding strategy, one focused on constructing domestic institutions capable of managing social transformation. To avoid destabilizing effects of democratization and marketization, his strategy calls for delayed elections until conditions are ripe; the electoral system that emphasizes moderation; strengthening of civil society; adopting conflict-reducing economic policies and controlling hate speech (Paris, 2004). This strategy also requires longer-term active involvement of IOs and their greater coordination.

The notions of social transformation and social justice are at the core of the sustainable peacebuilding approach promoted by Novelli et al. (2015). Building on Fraser, Galtung and Lederach's work, they suggest a peacebuilding practice that pays attention to the four interlinked processes of redistribution, recognition, representation and reconciliation, which the authors see as key components of the socially-just post-conflict society. They further emphasize that the remedies to social injustice, which are often at the root of the conflict, should include not just correcting outcomes (what they call 'affirmative remedies') but restructuring the existing generative frameworks that influence the outcomes (Novelli et al., 2015, p.11). The approach also strikes a balance between

exogenous and endogenous factors affecting the peacebuilding process by advocating for a balanced focus on the local, national and global. The authors see education as being a transformative remedy to social injustice in the post-conflict societies, noting the unfortunate lack of understanding of its role in the current peacebuilding processes. These contentions are explored in the next section.

2.2.2 Role of Education in post-conflict transitions

Education has long been recognized for its dual role in both contributing to as well as mitigating the violent conflict. Weak, inequitable and segregated schooling systems are often key conflict drivers (Novelli & Smith, 2011). As places where socialization and value creation occur, schools can facilitate formation of ethnic attitudes from an early age, including positive or negative prejudices towards others that only increase with time (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000). Education can thus promote stereotypes and encourage hatred. During conflict, education can provide a sense of normalcy and stability for children and develop knowledge and skills that provide protection (Novelli & Smith, 2011, p. 37). In the aftermath of the conflict, education can support social transformation by contributing to the economic development, fostering a culture of democracy and human rights, and by promoting social cohesion (Smith, 2015, Tawil & Harley, 2004). The Global Monitoring Report 2011 puts this point forward clearly:

It is only a slight exaggeration to say that a country's future will be as peaceful, prosperous and cohesive as its education system allows. If the citizens of the future receive an education that promotes tolerance, respect for others and an appreciation of the complex identities that make up multi-ethnic societies, appeals to violence based on bigotry, chauvinism and distrust of the 'other' will have less resonance. That is why education should be seen as a key element in the broader peacebuilding agenda. (UNESCO, 2011, p. 222)

The peacebuilding theory clearly recognizes the critical role of education in the social, political and economic transformations required to achieve sustainable peace (Smith, 2011). This role in various aspects of post-conflict transition is examined next.

Security and political transition

The security sector reforms in post-conflict settings focus on issues of demilitarization and disarmament, demobilization, the police and the justice system reforms. Although not readily recognized, the education can provide valuable support to all these processes. For example, education programmes on child protection, child registration, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, or anti-corruption can build required capacities of the police force, judiciary as well as educate the public (Smith 2011). Accelerated learning programmes for ex-combatants, especially youth, can facilitate employment and income-generation opportunities for them as well as contribute to their

empowerment and reintegration into the society, from which they often feel excluded (World Bank, 2011).

Similarly, education has been considered as a catalyst of democratization processes and hence the critical tool in the political transformation to democracy of the post-conflict society. It is argued that by raising the benefits of civic participation such as voting and promoting interest in politics and political activities, education introduces a culture of democracy. The research also suggests that “at the aggregate level, both the changes in overall educational attainment and the degree of equality in the distribution of education among members of a society contribute to explaining transitions to democracy” (Crespo-Cuaresma & Oberdabernig, 2014). Therefore, the early attention to the education reform aimed at improving quality and ensuring access to all social groups should be an integral part of the early peacebuilding process. In addition, specific education programmes on political rights, child rights, civic and citizenship education, or media education, implemented as part of political transition efforts, can support both constitutional and the reform of political institutions as well as promote political freedoms (Smith, 2011).

Economic transition

From the perspective of the economic development, conflicts represent ‘development in reverse’, thus, spurring economic recovery of the conflict-affected country is seen as a critical strategy for reducing the likelihood of civil war (World Bank, 2011). Collier and Hoeffler (2000) identify three economic factors that may affect the likelihood of conflict: low level of per capita income; low rates and/or stagnation in per capita income and high dependence on primary commodity exports. They further contend that doubling per capita income almost halves the risk of civil war when controlled for other variables (ibid). From this neoliberal perspective, education is important for two reasons: it builds human capital which is a key driver of economic growth, and it represents a security resource, especially when it comes to youth (World Bank, 2011). It follows then that the most urgent tasks in preventing violence and conflict are improving security, delivering basic justice and creating jobs (ibid.). The World Bank (2011) calls for prioritizing investments in enhancing skills and employability, technical and vocational education (TVET) and the second chance programs. Political and economic considerations, however, need to be made to ascertain whether a country's general conditions can facilitate self-employment opportunities (Novelli & Smith, 2011).

This role of education in creating human capital for economic development and poverty reduction is a necessary, although not sufficient, condition for conflict-affected countries to achieve transformation needed for sustainable peace. One of the key challenges for

countries emerging from conflict is to create a shared vision for the future of their society and to restore social cohesion. This involves examining the underlining causes of conflict, which is often missing from the security-, political- and economic-related peacebuilding interventions. The role of education in social transition and promoting social cohesion is examined next.

Social transition

Historically, nation-states have used education to manage major societal changes such as urbanization, immigration, or industrialization (Engel, 2009, p. 21). Similarly, in the transition from war to peace, education serves as a primary tool for promoting social solidarity as well as the medium through which society can deal with past injustices, historical memory, transitional justice processes, and better communal interaction (Sayed & Badroodien, 2016).

Education is thus a key tool for fostering social cohesion and reducing the effects of poverty, exclusion, social distrust, and marginalization (Jenson, 2010). Social cohesion is generally seen as having two dimensions: 'equality', which represents the existence of equal opportunities, absence of disparities and social inclusion; and 'social capital', which signifies the presence of strong social relations, interactions and ties within and between groups (Berger-Schmitt, 2000, Colletta & Cullen, 2000). These two dimensions are of particular relevance in post-conflict settings where the key drivers of conflict have often been inequality, discrimination, loss of trust in institutions and the disintegration of social bonds.

Education influences social cohesion in a variety of ways. For individuals, education provides access to social and economic participation; and for the whole society, it serves to preserve social ties, cultivate collaboration between individuals and transmit values of belonging, solidarity, and a vision of a more just society (Kantzara, 2011). Social capital theorists see education as the powerful generator of social capital and the key to providing bridging capital to individuals (Burde, 2004, Coleman, 1988, Putnam, 2000). Durkheim (1961) suggests that social cohesion must be actively created through education by promoting activities that serve the common good, which significantly reduces the divisive consequences of the focus on personal benefit. From the latter perspective, education is considered an instrument for building "organic solidarity" by helping individuals understand the complex structure of the society and their roles in it (McGinn, 1998).

Colenso (2006) sees education contribution to social cohesion through three interrelated aspects: governance (including transparency and participation in education policy

formulation, planning and management), equity and equality of opportunity (including equitable distribution of education resources, opportunities and outcomes), and teaching and learning process (including development of specific competencies in students). By building skills for conflict resolution, democratic participation and critical thinking, schools can foster student tolerance, respect for diversity and a sense of shared identity and values (Oder, 2005). Schools are also laboratories for collaboration and democratic participation so that they can affect social cohesion both through the teaching process as well as through their conduct as institutions (Hill, 2011).

Similarly, the earlier mentioned 4R framework by Novelli et al. (2015) charts the following four-pronged pathway for education to realize its positive potential to influence social cohesion and sustainable peace:

- Development of macro education policies and reforms that are sensitive to the inequalities and redistributive in terms of education inputs, resources and outcomes (redistribution).
- Recognition of cultural, religious, language diversity, and incorporating citizenship and civic education as support to state-building (recognition).
- Development of education policies and reforms in a participatory way and promoting strong school governance (representation),
- Addressing historical and contemporary economic, political and cultural injustices that have caused the conflict in the first place, openly teaching about the past and its implication for the present and future, contributing to integration and social cohesion and improving the level of trust, both vertical and horizontal (reconciliation).

2.2.3 Section Summary

This section has provided an overview of peacebuilding from the theoretical and empirical perspectives and presented key critiques of the current peacebuilding practice. It has also highlighted the critical role of education in all aspects of the peacebuilding process: from the security and political to economic and social transitions; and its particular role in restoring social cohesion.

What emerges from the literature is the over-emphasis of current peacebuilding practice on security, political and economic transitions at the expense of the social one, which is critical to sustainable peace. Similarly, the literature questions adequacy of the top-down approaches to peacebuilding that neglect the local ownership. The research analyses these claims against the experience of the education reform process in Bosnia.

The literature strongly suggests that in order to take advantage of education's potential to contribute to peace, peacebuilding efforts carried out by IOs should include the education sector reform. The following section interrogates to what extent the current peacebuilding practitioners have heeded that advice.

2.3 Practice of Education Policy Development in post-conflict

Education can play a significant role in reducing the risk of conflict, providing protection during the conflict, and contributing to reconciliation in its aftermath. However, the literature finds that dominant approaches to peacebuilding do not sufficiently use this potential. Those claims are reviewed next.

2.3.1 Education in current peacebuilding practice

Absence from Peace agreements

Peace agreements are political solutions to armed conflicts. As blueprints for post-conflict peacebuilding, state-building, social reformulation, and conflict transformation, peace agreements are critical elements in mapping out how peace will be built and how the social contract will be renegotiated in the aftermath of a conflict (Dupuy, 2008). The role that education plays in peacebuilding is often determined by its articulation in peace agreements. As a central component of the production and reproduction of power structures in society, education is strongly connected to the root causes of conflict, which may include distribution of resources, access to political power in societies, recognition of identity and cultural development, and poverty (Save the Children, 2009).

Inclusion of education in peace agreements is therefore of critical importance for the success of peacebuilding. Tawil and Harley (2004) note that "the nature of the political settlement, whether internally developed or externally imposed, has implications for the nature of the political will to reform education, as well as for the construction or consolidation of legitimating mechanisms which gave education policymakers a mandate for change" (p. 14). Incorporating educational issues into peace agreements can help to ensure that education plays an active role in building peace by being a catalyst for change in the aftermath of conflict (Dupuy, 2008).

Despite its recognized value, the literature finds that many peace agreements, including the one signed in Bosnia, failed to articulate how an education system - and society more generally - will be reformed to contribute to lasting peace. Several factors contribute to the exclusion of education: prioritization of the immediate cessation of direct violence over long-term sociopolitical reforms and responses; perception that education is a development rather than humanitarian issue; absence of educational specialists from the peace negotiation table; the type of conflict (inter- or intrastate, identity-, revolutionary-

or secession-driven); and the views on the role education played in the outbreak of the conflict (Dupuy, 2008).

This exclusion clearly has an implication for the role of education in the subsequent peacebuilding process. If absent from or only nominally present in the peace agreement, it is likely that education will be marginalized from the peacebuilding process. As the next section will show, the current peacebuilding practice of emphasizing security and political agendas in the immediate aftermath of the conflict, coupled with the absence of education in peace agreements, substantially weakens education's potential to contribute to peace.

Marginalization from peacebuilding

As discussed in section 2.2, in the current neoliberal approach to peacebuilding, the emphasis on the security, politics and economics has sidelined the social and cultural dimensions of peacebuilding. 'Security first' agenda imposes a sequencing and hierarchy of priorities in the peacebuilding process, where security is a prerequisite for political, then economic, then social development. In this arrangement, education is only part of the longer-term development strategy. The literature examining education programming in conflict-affected countries corroborates these claims. In their case study of Nepal, Lebanon and Sierra Leone, Novelli and Smith (2011) demonstrate how in Sierra Leone, education reform under DFID leadership only started ten years after the conflict, while in Lebanon and Nepal, the UN continued to invest in peacekeeping and security issues, neglecting the education sector all together (Novelli & Smith, 2011). Some authors point out that the education is often "viewed as a highly 'personal' domestic issue in which reluctant international administrators would be loath to become involved" (Perry, 2003, p. 43).

'Security first' agenda is promoted by a strong security sector composed of actors such as the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), the PBF and the United Nations Development Programme. The ranks of these organisations seldom include education specialists, and there is little coordination between UN education practitioners (such as UNICEF or UNESCO staff) and the security sector staff. The security sector is closely linked to national military and foreign office actors of major donors as well as NATO (Novelli et al., 2014). As such, it is often guided by the interest and priorities of the key foreign actors. For example, describing Bosnia's case, Perry (2003) notes that "short-term mindset driving the international community during the drafting of the DPA likely precluded any thought of efforts requiring long-term commitments, such as educational reform. There was strong pressure, particularly by the United States, to end the international involvement of peacekeeping troops after one

year and strong reluctance to take any steps that might be seen as indicating extended involvement in the Balkans” (p.43).

Donor interests are important aspects of education marginalization in conflict-affected countries. The low investment in humanitarian responses continues well into the post-conflict period. For example, according to the Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), education received only 1.4% of the total humanitarian ask around the world in 2016 (OCHA, 2016). Donors commonly quote concerns over implementation capacities in justifying non-investment in fragile contexts. However, a better explanation may be found in the phenomena of aid politicization, whereby donors tend to invest in countries that are of their strategic interest (for example, US investment in Afghanistan and Iraq post 9/11) despite their fragility and lack of institutional capacity (Novelli et al., 2014).

In conclusion, education marginalization from the peacebuilding process that begins with its weak presence or absence from peace agreements is a result of the dominant neoliberal approach to peacebuilding that prioritizes political and economic aspects over social ones. Lack of donor interest in investing in education, both in the humanitarian and post-conflict phases, further contributes to its marginalization.

Insufficient understanding of the role of education

In the three-country study mentioned earlier, Novelli and Smith (2011) find a considerable lack of understanding of the peacebuilding concept and the relationship between education and peace amongst IO education practitioners working in post-conflict. For some of them, peacebuilding represents a narrow set of activities that bring about security and stability; others understand it to encompass all outcomes of education, while the third group contests its very concept. Researchers also note the tendency of IO practitioners to limit education contribution to peace through ‘peace education’ interventions or to retrofit results of education interventions to peacebuilding goals, while, in reality, the interventions they implemented had not been developed with those goals in mind (Novelli & Smith, 2011).

One reason for this may lie in the fact that the peacebuilding theory, which encompasses a wide range of cross-sectoral interventions, has not been fully integrated in education programmes of IOs (Smith, 2011). As noted earlier, education has a role to play in all aspects of peacebuilding, therefore if education programmes are to contribute to the transformation processes needed for long-lasting peace, they need to be planned with this holistic perspective in mind and predicated on a robust conflict analysis. However, the literature finds that the education programmes still have a single-issue approach,

aiming to resolve one problem at a time (offer employment for youth or ensure equal access to education to all children, etc.) (ibid.).

Due to the lack of understanding of education's role in peacebuilding, education reforms supported by international actors are often dominated by the emphasis on technical solutions and considerations of efficiency over equity concerns (ibid). This prevents them from “identify(ing) and engag(ing) with more deep-rooted problems in education, such as social and political exclusion, linguistic repression and discrimination” (Novelli et al., 2014, p. 3). Literature further points to a disconnect between peacebuilding and conflict practitioners and education specialists working in the post-conflict settings, with both groups lacking the knowledge of each other's fields and operating in silos (ibid). The next section analyses the implications of these narrow conceptions of education for the education policymaking process in post-conflict settings.

2.3.2 Key features of education policymaking in the context of peacebuilding

Limited recognition of education's potential to contribute to peacebuilding is particularly evident in three aspects of the policymaking process: the timing, appropriateness of policy choices and the location of policymaking.

Sequencing of education reform in post-conflict

As noted in previous sections, marginalization of education from the peacebuilding process begins with the exclusion of education experts from the peace negotiations, and the subsequent underrepresentation and/or absence of education from peace agreements. Furthermore, the social sector reforms are commonly included in the longer-term reconstruction strategy but neglected in the early years of the peacebuilding process.

There is a debate in the peacebuilding literature on whether this delayed timing of the education reform works for the benefit or detriment of sustainable peace. The World Bank, for example, maintains that the early tackling of sensitive education issues (such as language of instruction, teaching of history or curriculum reform) can lead to reopening animosities and past grievances. Analyzing the early stages of IO involvement in Bosnia, World Development Report 2011 for example, concludes that deliberate efforts by the international actors to exclude divisive messages from educational content, “had unintended consequences of increasing suspicions of external politicization of education, in effect exacerbating local divisions” (World Bank, 2011, p. 169). From the World Bank perspective, “the scope and speed of reform are themselves risk factors—and attempting to do too much too soon may actually increase the risk of resumed conflict “(ibid, p. 145). The alternative approach proposed includes three key areas of focus that are critical for

recovery – security, justice and job creation – and tackling economic, education and health reforms gradually. In order to strengthen institutions and build external legitimacy, the World Bank proposes moving progressively from small, more achievable targets to more ambitious ones.

On the opposite side are those who claim that the sequencing of the peacebuilding process (security, democratization, elections, development) is limiting and misses the opportunity for the education to make meaningful contribution to sustainable peace (Smith, 2011). These observers recommend that early engagement in the education reform can produce some vital peace premiums. For example, the removal of school fees, recognition of returnees' education attainment and provision of accelerated learning programmes, can serve to instill population's trust in the state as well as to address some of the root causes of conflict, such as discrimination in educational access of minority groups (UNESCO, 2011). The Global Monitoring Report 2011 describes how in Ethiopia, Afghanistan or Mozambique, the early government efforts to increase access to education for all groups in the society created conditions that contributed to the long-term stability and peace in these countries (UNESCO, 2011). The critical ingredients of this success were strengthening national planning; development of information systems; financial commitments and inclusive education (ibid).

Both perspectives recognize the leadership role of national government in the reconstruction and reform processes with the IOs playing a support role in terms of human, technical and financial resources. However, limiting the role of IOs to the technical and financial support may not be sufficient in the contexts where the national leadership is geared more towards further solidifying divisions created by the conflict than working to promote social cohesion and reconciliation.

Generic education approaches

Any education reform is complex, but the one in the conflict-affected countries is doubly so as it occurs in the context of severely weakened institutions, diminished human and financial resources and weakened policymaking and governance capacity. Unlike in other settings, policymakers in post-conflict are concerned with addressing the root causes of the conflict, promoting social cohesion, and rebuilding trust and legitimacy of governments. This calls for specific approaches by policymakers that take into account complex security, political, economic, social and cultural idiosyncrasies of the given setting (Hillman, 2011, Novelli et al., 2014). At the same time, the literature highlights IO tendency to engage in generic programming rather than implement “educational interventions that are informed by high-quality political economy and conflict analysis that is sensitive to the conflict dynamics of local contexts” (Novelli & Smith, 2011, p. 37).

Conflict sensitive education programmes and policies are predicated on a robust conflict analysis that seeks to identify "causes (proximate, intermediate and root), dynamics and forces of conflict, capturing its political, social, economic, security, cultural dimensions (UNICEF, 2012). Novelli et al. (2014) find that the global education agenda is neither conflict nor context-sensitive, resulting in inappropriate agenda setting, misguided policy development and failed policy implementation. Furthermore, IOs engagement in the post-conflict education reform is often driven by the economic prerogatives and focused on development of human capital, without consideration of education's potential to play an expanded role in addressing inequalities, promoting social cohesion and reconciliation. Researchers also note that "education policy and programmes are sometimes framed within technical parameters that bypass pivotal peace-related issues in post-conflict societies, including the rectification of economic, political, social and cultural inequalities and recognition of the identities of marginalised groups" (Novelli et al., 2014, p.63).

Two education issues, decentralisation and curriculum reform, exemplify these problems. Decentralisation is arguably one of the most 'travelled' reforms in the public sector, promoted widely through key international education agreements, such as EFA, MDGs and now SDGs. IOs have enthusiastically promoted this governance model both in developing and post-conflict settings, claiming its effectiveness in improving quality and efficiency of education provision. In post-conflict settings, decentralised governance is viewed as a way to promote democracy, address root causes of conflict and mitigate renewal of hostilities (Brancati, 2006, Davies, 2010, Schou & Haug, 2005, Srivastava & Larizza, 2011). It is assumed that through policies such as School-Based Management (SBM), education decentralisation may foster social cohesion by creating spaces for inter-group collaboration, building trust, promoting social inclusion, and reducing perceptions of inequalities between groups. However, despite its widespread use, scholars and practitioners still disagree whether education decentralisation produces desirable outcomes. Evidence from Nepal and Central America points to its potentially detrimental effect in fostering further cleavages between groups and jeopardizing fragile peace (Novelli et al., 2014). In its 2010 "Do No Harm" paper OECD cautioned against devolution without sufficient analysis of political context or capacity constraints, noting serious risks if "political power at the centre is highly fragmented, or constellations of local power are misunderstood" (quoted in World Bank 2011, p. 166). Moreover, this type of decontextualized policy development fails to address deep-rooted structural and systemic challenges driving conflict (Novelli et al., 2014).

Similarly, IO approach to curriculum reforms in conflict-affected countries may differ from those in the development context. The stakes are high in post-conflict, with education holding a potential to promote reconciliation and social cohesion and facilitate much-needed social transformation for sustainable peace. At the same time, states emerging from conflict are struggling to balance the need for cohesive citizenry with the obligation to protect rights of ethnic or minority groups to their linguistic, cultural or religious autonomy (Perry, 2003). The main challenge for curriculum developers in conflict-affected settings is to capture how society thinks of achieving social cohesion in and through education (Tawil & Harley, 2004). Balancing diversity and sameness as competing imperatives of social justice may be the most complex task of the reform.

Diversity in the education system is usually managed in three ways: thorough assimilation - single institutions operating according to the values of the dominant tradition; separation - separate institutions, each serving different constituencies with relatively homogeneous populations; and integration – common or shared institutions with diversity represented within the population of each institution (Smith, 2006). While many multi-cultural societies also grapple with these choices, they are particularly salient in conflict-affected societies, as they touch the core of the conflict and its underlying drivers. Curriculum reformers, therefore, need to recognize the implications of each of these approaches for reconciliation and restoring social cohesion in the society. To maximize the positive influence of diversity in education, Smith (2006) suggests analyzing education policies and practice, including curriculum, “in terms of their sensitivity to diversity and potential to aggravate or ameliorate conflict” (p. 33). Curriculum reform then needs to be prefaced on the dialogue and negotiation and if it is to contribute to peacebuilding it must be context-specific and rooted in analysis of the historical, social and cultural context of the place (Tawil & Harley, 2004). For IOs participating in curriculum reforms it is important to recognize that the reform process needs to be “gradual, participatory, and informed by the conflict analysis” (Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies, 2013).

These findings and observations are particularly pertinent for this study, given that the education decentralisation and curriculum changes were at the crux of education reform challenges that IOs faced in Bosnia.

2.3.3 Section Summary

The section discussed how the role of education is conceived in the post-conflict peacebuilding processes. Several observations are made in the literature in this regard: education is often absent from peace agreements; education is marginalized from the peacebuilding process, and there is a general lack of understanding amongst IO

practitioners of education's potential to build sustainable peace. As a result, the policy development process in the context of peacebuilding is defined by several problematic features including a late start of the education reform and focus on generic reforms based on global experiences rather than analysis of the political economy of the specific setting..

Through the examination of the Bosnian peacebuilding process, this study will shed light on the position of education in peace agreements; examine claims of the dominance of the liberal peacebuilding and the 'security first' agenda in practice and seek to ascertain the level of understanding of education's role in peacebuilding by IO practitioners involved in the education reform.

2.4 Chapter Conclusion

In conclusion to this Chapter, I present a summary of key findings from the literature and the Conceptual Framework that emerged from the review and guided the research.

2.4.1 Key findings from the Literature

The literature reviewed provided a practical framework for analyzing the education policy development in post-conflict Bosnia. The following key findings and research gaps informed the development of the research questions.

- The peacebuilding process is the major platform for education policy development in post-conflict and a major means through which IOs exercise their roles and influence policy development. *This research takes a closer look at how IOs engage in the policymaking process and what motivations and assumptions drive their actions.*
- Education can play a critical role in post-conflict security, economic, political and social transformation. Nevertheless, the current peacebuilding practice is failing to capitalize on the role that education can play in ensuring sustainable peace. *The research investigates these assumptions against the specific case of Bosnia.*
- The late start of the social sector reforms, including education, in post-conflict settings, misses the opportunity for using education to promote sustainable peace. *The research examines these claims and their implications for the Bosnia's education reform.*
- The capacity of IO technical staff working in the peacebuilding context to provide relevant guidance to the education reform process may be inadequate not only amongst security or humanitarian sector staff but also amongst the traditional education experts who lack experience in conflict-sensitive policy and programme development. *The research investigates these claims against the specific case of Bosnia.*

- Technical solutions and generic approaches to the policymaking in post-conflict can result in the missed opportunity to use education as a vehicle for sustainable peacebuilding. *The research examines whether this was the approach of IO in Bosnia.*
- Educational decentralisation and curriculum reform are complex policies that require careful contextualization and adaptation in post-conflict settings if they are to contribute to the peacebuilding goals. *The research examines how IOs worked within the decentralised education system and attempted to support curriculum reform while seeking to embed peacebuilding outcomes into the policymaking process.*
- The literature highlights IO tendency to dominate the policy development process at the expense of national and local ownership. While the critical perspective proposes that IOs should limit their influence, there is a recognition that in some contexts a stronger international role is needed to bulwark against the local peace spoilers. *This research examines the later claim against the Bosnian case.*

2.4.2 Conceptual Framework for the current research

This study draws on theories and concepts presented in the literature review as it attempts to understand the role of IOs in managing education reform and creating education policies that are conducive to the creation of sustainable peace. It uses CPA (described in section 2.1.1) as the analytical tool for analysis of IO policymaking.

Peacebuilding represents the overarching context against which IO policymaking is examined, its key outcome assumed to be the education that promotes sustainable peace (see Figure 1). The education policy in post-conflict is discursively produced through the interactions between the global, regional and local scales. IOs are the principal vehicles through which global and regional discourses are transported and reinterpreted in the local context. Through sub-RQ1, the study critically analyses these interactions by questioning assumptions, values and ideologies of IO policymakers, their understanding of the political, social and cultural context in which they worked, as well as their awareness of education's role in fostering social cohesion and reconciliation. The study also looks at the dynamic internal interactions between the IOs as they bring into the policymaking process their competing priorities and differential access to power.

Through sub-RQ2, IO efforts to embed peacebuilding in the content, priorities and outcomes of the education reform are examined against the multi-scalar influences. While their power in the policymaking process is recognized and reflected upon, the study does not explicitly examine the role of national stakeholders in Bosnia's reform but focuses exclusively on IOs.

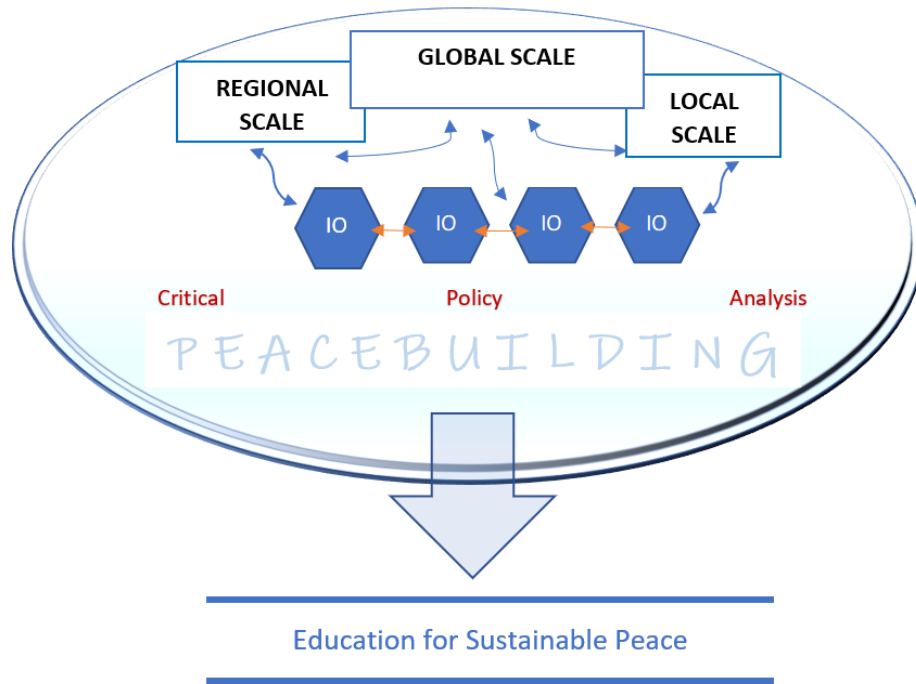


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Chapter 3: Context

This Chapter presents the context for the study. Section 3.1 provides the basic population and education indicators. A historical perspective on the ethnic and national identity formation in Bosnia is then provided in Section 3.2 as a way of highlighting the issues that defined the 1992-95 conflict. Section 3.3 describes the legacy of the pre-conflict education system. Section 3.4 highlights key features of the system that emerged in the years after the war, focusing on the issues relevant for this study. Section 3.5 presents the goals and outcomes of the first post-conflict education reform and introduces mandates of the IOs that lead the reform.

3.1 Bosnia in Numbers

Geography and people

Bosnia is situated in Southeastern Europe, on the western side of the Balkan Peninsula. Covering the area of 51,129 square kilometres, it is home to 3.4 million people. Its population comprises three large ethnic groups: Bosniak⁵ (50.1%), Bosnian Serb (30.8%) and Bosnian Croat (15.4%), and several smaller ethnic groups, including Jews, Roma and Turks, who represent 2.7% of the population (Central Intelligence Agency [CIA], 2019). Three official languages are spoken: Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian. In terms of religious affiliation, 50.7% of the population declares themselves as Muslim, 30.7% as Orthodox, 15.2% as Roman Catholic, 2.2 % as Atheist, Agnostic or undeclared, while 1.2%, practices other religions (ibid.)

The Education system

In 2017/2018 schools year (SY), there were 406,982 primary and secondary school students enrolled in 2,128 schools and is taught by 36,584 teachers in Bosnia (see Table 1).

Basic education in Bosnia is free with compulsory primary school lasting nine years. Secondary education is offered through either technical and vocational or general secondary schools (called

Table 1: Students, teachers and schools per education level, SY 2017/18

	PRIMARY SCHOOL	SECONDARY SCHOOL
Students	282,614	124,368
Schools	1,817	311
Teachers	23,969	12,615

Note. Data from Agency for Statistic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 2018, 2018a

⁵ Bosniak has replaced Muslim as an ethnic term in part to avoid confusion with the religious term Muslim - an adherent of Islam.

gymnasiums), and it lasts 3 or 4 years. Tertiary education is provided through 20 universities (8 public) with 139 faculties plus 10 academies and 4 religious institutions.

Bosnia's education indicators are good in terms of access and completion, as well as gender parity (see Table

Table 2: Students, teachers and schools per education level, SY 2017/18

Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) Education Indicators 2012	
Literacy rate (15-24)	99.5 %
School readiness	16.3 %
Net intake rate for primary education	83.2 %
Primary school net attendance ratio (adjusted)	97.6 %
Secondary school net attendance ratio (adjusted)	91.8 %
Children reaching last grade of primary school	99.5 %
Net primary completion rate	91.5 %
Transition rate to secondary school	96.9 %
Gender Parity Index (primary school)	1.00
Gender Parity Index (secondary school)	1.03

Note. Data from Agency for Statistic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 2018, 2018a)

2). Quality, however, remains a challenge, with curricula lacking focus on skills, values, and attitudes development as desirable learning outcomes and teachers relying heavily on lecture and didactics and lacking modern and effective knowledge transfer skills (USAID, 2017).

3.2 Shaping of ethnic and national identities

The issue of ethnic and national identity is at the core of Bosnia's post-conflict peacebuilding. The context for the study thus starts with a brief overview of the creation of ethnic identities in the territory of Bosnia from the early 10th century to present days.

Strategically positioned on the trade route between Europe and Asia, Bosnia has had a rich political, social, and cultural history marked by repeated conquests and meeting of various cultures and religions, which account for its cultural diversity. Since the early 10th century present-day Bosnian territories were inhabited by a Slavic tribe that lived relatively independently under the protection of the Byzantine Empire until the late 14th century when the territory became a Kingdom in the Hungarian Crowned Lands. In this early history, Bosnian population was uniformly Christian and belonged to the Bosnian Church, an indigenous branch of Catholicism. With the Ottoman Empire's conquest of the territory in 1463, however, the Bosnian population began to form its present-day ethno-national identities (Bennett, 2016). In Ottoman times (1463-1887), large swaths of local population converted to Islam, mainly for the political and economic benefits, in this way dominating the political and administrative structures of the country (ibid.). Other religious groups, mainly Catholic and Orthodox Christians, continued to practice their faith relatively unhindered in the communities that were geographically close but isolated from each other. Between 1878 and 1918 Bosnia came under the control of the Austria-Hungary's Habsburg Monarchy. During Habsburg times, the inter-communal contact

existed through trade, with the Catholic population now enjoying more benefits than Muslim and Orthodox ones. When in 1918 Bosnia became part of the short-lived Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918-1941)⁶, the Orthodox Christians gained more political power over the other two groups (ibid). By the start of the Second World War, one Slavic tribe in Bosnia was divided into three nationalities “that were at once very different from and similar to each other, alternately antagonistic and co-operative and at once Bosnian and extra-Bosnian in their orientation - the Bosnian Serbs both Bosnian and Serbian, the Bosnian Croats both Bosnian and Croatian and the Bosnian Muslims both Bosnian and Ottoman or Islamic” (Hoare, 2007, quoted in Bennett, 2016, p. 9).

It was not until Bosnia became one of the six federal units of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) in 1945, however, that the people of Bosnia began to develop a real sense of regional, Bosnian and national, Yugoslav identity. This was successfully promoted through the guiding principle of SFRY's inter-ethnic policy, called "brotherhood and unity". Devised by SFRY's leader, Josip Broz Tito, the policy was largely successful in maintaining the country's political stability and keeping ethnic nationalism under control. Using external security threat as a strategy to keep ethnic tensions at bay, Tito skilfully quelled any domestic unrests (Lane, 2004). However, after Tito's death in 1980, various political interests exploited ethnic differences, resulting in the creation of ethnic-based separatist movements that eventually lead to the break-up of the country and the civil wars that followed.⁷

Following the referendum that saw 66.4% of the population supporting independence, Bosnia declared sovereignty in October 1991 and became recognised by the international community as an independent state in April 1992. The Bosnian Serbs, who for the most part abstained from the referendum, rejected the declaration, and began armed resistance supported by neighbouring Serbia and Montenegro. Through the brutal tactic of 'ethnic cleansing,' the aim was to move the non-Serb population from the areas considered Serb and eventually join those territories to the "Greater Serbia" (CIA, 2019). The three and a half years of war resulted in over 100,000 deaths and the displacement

⁶ Kingdom of Serb, Croats and Slovenes was created in 1918 and renamed into Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929.

⁷ Dissolution of the SFRY began in 1991, with three of its six republics, Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia, declaring independence, followed by Bosnia in early 1992. While the independence of Slovenia and Macedonia was largely uncontested, the Croatian and subsequently Bosnian proclamations of independence provoked reaction from their large ethnic Serb population, who argued for their sovereign right as an ethnic group to remain in Yugoslavia. Both countries became embroiled in civil conflict, with Bosnia suffering more significant casualties and destruction. Also in 1992, Serbia and Montenegro became the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), although other former republics opposed its status as the legal successor to SFRY and the United Nations denied it. Consequently, in 2003, FRY renamed itself to 'Serbia and Montenegro'. In 2006, Montenegro became an independent state, and in 2008 Kosovo, the former Autonomous Province of Serbia, declared independence that was recognized by 110 countries but not Serbia. In the territory of a once single country, today stand seven independent states.

of more than half of Bosnia's (at the time) 4.3 million people (Bennett, 2016). The conflict ended in December 1995, with the signing of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, also known as the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA).

3.3 Structure and governance of the new state

In an effort to bring a violent identity-based conflict to an end, the international framers of the DPA used the federal system and decentralised governance as frameworks for providing interethnic accommodation and channels for democratic contestation (Bojičić-Dželilović, 2013). Under the terms of the agreement the country was divided



Figure 2: Map of Bosnia-Herzegovina

into two entities - the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBH), and Republika Srpska (RS) (see Figure 2). The Federation, covering 51 per cent of the territory and a population of 2.2 million, comprises ten cantons and is ethnically mixed.⁸ The RS, covering 49 per cent of the territory, has a population of 1.2 million predominately ethnic Serbs. The District of Brčko, with a population of 80,000, was created in the disputed northern area of the country as a separate district supervised by international authorities.

The FBH and RS entities have authority over most government functions, and each has their own president, police, parliament, and other government bodies. The central BH Government, with its three-member rotating presidency and the Council of Ministers, is responsible for the foreign, monetary, and external trade policies as well as inter-entity coordination.

In the immediate aftermath of the conflict, the DPA implementation was conferred on the multinational Implementation Force led by NATO, and the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) (Balazs, 2008). PIC established the Office of the High Representative (OHR) to oversee the implementation of the civilian aspects of the agreement in the transitional period until the local authorities were ready to self-govern (OHR, 2019). The High Representative was tasked to monitor implementation of the peace agreement, promote

⁸ Five cantons have majority Bosniak ethnic group (Sarajevo, Zenica-Doboj, Una-Sana, Tuzla and Bosnia-Podrinje), three have majority Croat (West-Herzegovina, Posavina and Canton 10), and two are ethnically mixed with no majority (Herzegovina-Neretva and Central Bosnia).

full compliance of all parties with the agreement; and facilitate the resolution of any difficulties arising in connection with civilian implementation (*ibid.*) The HR's powers were expanded by PIC in 1997, when OHR got the authority to: a. adopt binding decisions when local parties seem unable or unwilling to act; and b. remove from office public officials who violate legal commitments or, in general, the DPA. These so-called "Bonn Powers" were later on used by some HRs in solving education reform issues. The OSCE was given the task of organising the first free elections in 1996, the UN was given the mandate for the police reform and UNHCR for the refugee return.

The DPA introduced a corporate form of power-sharing that focuses only on the three main ethnic groups. Resembling Lijphart's (1977) consociationalism, it entails sharing of executive power, proportionality, group autonomy and veto rights but lacks critical conditions for success such as over-arching loyalties to the state and a tradition of elite accommodation (Bennett, 2016). With 3 presidents, 13 prime ministers, more than 180 ministers, and 700 members of several parliaments, all serving the population of 3.4 million, the Bosnia's governance system is extremely complex.

Indeed, the political situation in Bosnia today is reminiscent of the pre-1992 era, as ethno-centric political parties are locked in a struggle over the very existence of the state. At one end of the spectrum is a vision of Bosnia as a unitary and citizen-based state, and on the other is that of a loose federation with ethnic-based rights and protections (Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 2012). The RS leadership has repeatedly called for the referendum on secession from Bosnia and continues to question the very existence of the unified country. In this situation, the government is challenged to bring about any serious economic and social reforms that would create conditions for sustainable and balanced economic growth and the EU integration process (World Bank, 2015). Twenty-three years after the DPA the country is not ready for self-sustaining, unguided ownership of its future and the HR is still discharging his duties (ICG 2007, Bennett, 2016).

The DPA made no mention of the power-sharing system's future and the eventual transformation of Bosnia into an integrated society. As noted in Chapter 2, constitutional settlements in post-conflict societies aim to create institutions that would traverse the division and transform conflict into non-violent, political processes (Cox, 2001). However, the DPA has created a weak federal state, with few governance functions allocated to the central government and no revenue of its own that would enable it to build significant executive capacity. Cox (2001) notes that "Bosnia will need stronger central institutions if it is ever to acquire a single economic space or carry out the reforms needed for progressive integration with the European Union" (p.7).

The DPA is largely viewed as successful in bringing an end to the violence. Its legacy, however, in creating structure for reconciliation and peaceful coexistence is highly contested. Nowhere is that more evident than in the education system whose transformation from the pre-war years to present day is examined next.

3.4 Education Legacy (1945 -1995)

This section briefly reviews the Bosnia's education system before and during the 1992-1995 war as a way to understand how that education legacy may have influenced the development of the new, post-war education system.

3.4.1 Education in the SFRY

In the aftermath of the WWII which saw one million Yugoslavs killed and country economically devastated, education was seen as a platform for new state consolidation as well as for ensuring development of a socialist economy (Perry, 2003). With 'brotherhood and unity' as its key ideological principle, education systems throughout the SFRY promoted a unified Yugoslav identity, suppressing any expression of ethno-national sentiments. Three official languages of instruction existed (Serbo-Croatian, Slovenian and Macedonian) with bilingual education offered in 9 different languages of minorities (Perry, 2003).

The federal government devolved responsibility for managing the education system to the six Republics and two autonomous Provinces. At the same time, the integration of the system across the country was achieved through federal professional and quasi-political organisations in which each Republic and Provincial delegates met to develop policies that governed their respective education bodies (Georgeoff, 1982). In 1974, devolution of the responsibilities was promoted even further to include financing of the individual systems, resulting in unequal quality of education provision between richer (Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia) and poorer republics (BH, Montenegro, Macedonia).

Nonetheless, in terms of access and quality, the education systems fared well - by some statistics, virtually all children in Bosnia completed 8-years of primary school and most completed 4-years of secondary (World Bank, 1996).

3.4.2 Wartime education

Following their independence, the countries emerging from the SFRY generally sought to promote ethnic identities as a way to justify the secession from the unified state (Pašalić-Kreso, 2008, Perry, 2003). Education became a useful instrument in these efforts. In Bosnia, the three ethno-national parties that won the first multiparty elections in 1990 began focusing their education agenda on promoting differences between languages and endorsing ethnic-based accounts of history and geography. Perry (2003)

notes that "nationalist-driven teachings promoted division and fear, preparing the ground for ethnic cleansing operations aimed primarily against the Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim) population" (p.22).

During the war, massive population displacement and destruction of education facilities severely disrupted education provision. In many places, including besieged Sarajevo, where the security situation forced schools to close, education services were delivered through community-organised interventions: teachers taught in their homes, shelters, and garages. By the time the war ended, fifty per cent of school infrastructure was destroyed, enrolment in primary and secondary school dropped by 50%, and the teaching force was decimated by army enlistments, killings, or emigration abroad. This resulted in the proliferation of untrained teachers now deployed to schools (Stabback, 2008, World Bank, 1996). It was also during the war that the seeds of the divided education system were sowed. The curricula and textbooks used in different areas of the country were either imported from neighbouring Croatia and Serbia to teach Bosnian Croat and Serb children or adjusted from the pre-war curricula for Bosniak students (Pašalić-Kreso, 2008).

3.5 Emergence of the new education system (1996-2000)

3.5.1 Development and structure

In the immediate aftermath of the conflict, international assistance to the education sector focused on emergency relief and infrastructure reconstruction. In the period from 1996 to 2000, IOs engaged in peacebuilding showed little interest in tackling the education reform, instead placing priority on military and police reforms, elections, and refugee return (Fisher, 2006, Perry, 2003). The fact that the DPA made only marginal mention of education provided the context in which no international body was mandated to look over the education system. This sent a signal to national policymakers that IOs considered education a local issue, implicitly giving them a mandate to organize the system in accordance with their own political agendas.

The new Constitution that emerged from the DPA recognised the right of all children to be educated in their own language drawing on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Although mutually intelligible and recognised as one language (Serbo-Croatian) before the war, Bosnian, Serbian, and Croatian languages were now considered distinct, and became official languages of the new state. This gave further legitimacy to the local politicians' demands to create three mono-ethnic and mono-lingual education streams within the system.

The governance structure of the education sector that emerged out of the DPA is amongst the most complex ones in the world (see Figure 3). As per the constitutional arrangement, the education system is managed by thirteen Ministries of Education (MoE): two at the level of entities (FBH and RS), ten at the cantonal level and one at the district level in Brčko which is still under international supervision. There is no state MoE. Instead, the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MoCA) holds legal responsibility for coordinating education activities. In reality, however, MoCA does not have the needed authority vis-à-vis the cantons required to carry out its legal obligations (UN Human Rights Council, 2008).

With one Ministry, the RS education system is highly centralised, while in the FBH it is highly decentralised. The education system in RS is managed by the entity law and in FBH by autonomous, cantonal education laws. Brčko District has its own laws that govern four levels of education. In the period discussed in this study, each canton had its own law of pre-primary, primary, secondary, and higher education, resulting in over 30 different laws governing the provision of education in the country (EU, 2005). The Framework Law adopted in 2003 to harmonise the system introduced the seeds of concurrent governance between the state and entity/cantonal education authorities. However, its implementation remains challenging, and the proliferation of different education laws continues. As a 2015 EU report notes, "the result of such disunion is uneven education policies, emphasis on the national group of subjects and lack of any valid external evaluation of students' achievements after finishing primary and secondary school" (EU, 2015, p. 3).

The education system in Bosnia effectively "entrenches, legitimates and reproduces the power-sharing system" (Fontana, 2019, p.13) and much like the country itself, twenty-three years after the conflict does not seem to be transitioning towards integration nor serves to build the sense of national unity and common citizenship. The specific features of the system are examined next.

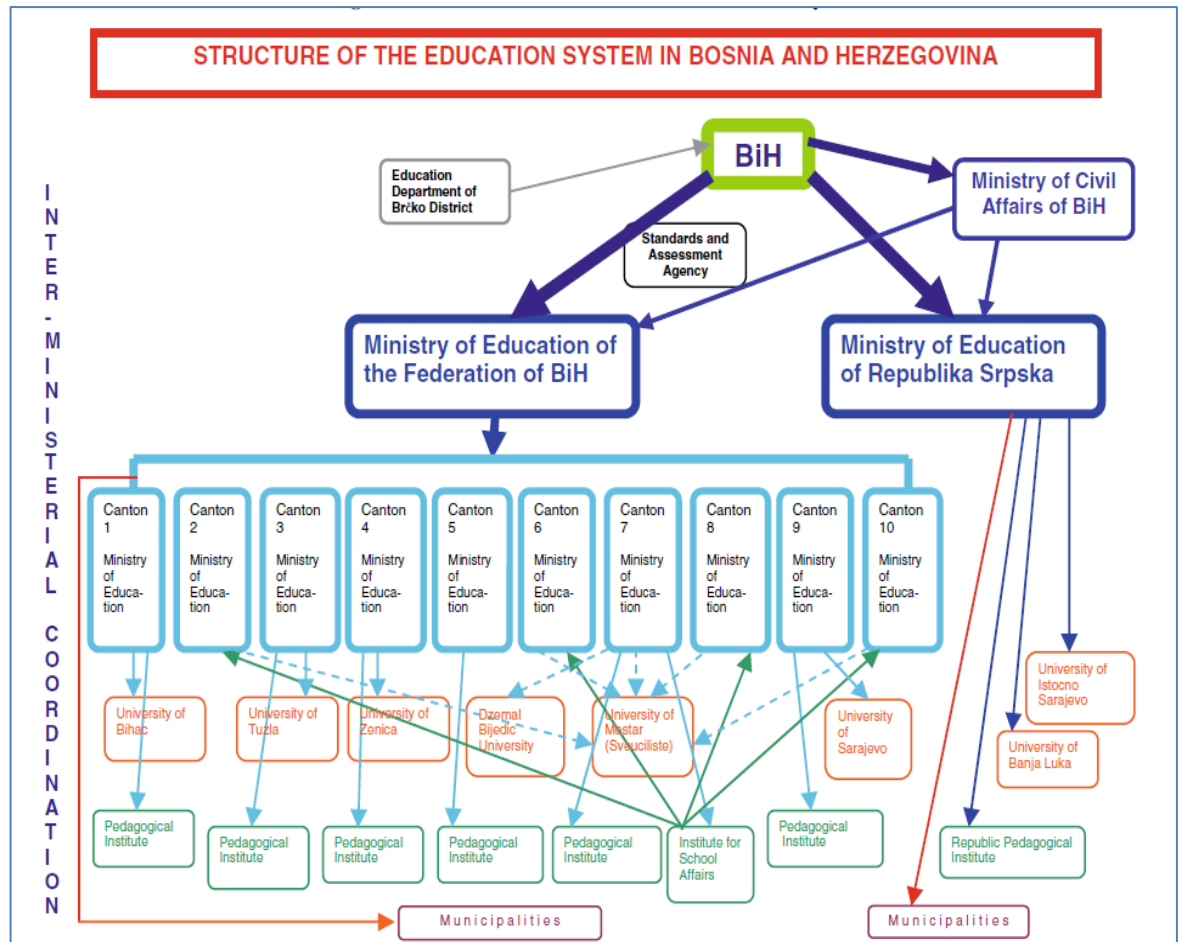


Figure 3: Structure of the BH educational system. Reprinted from: *The war and post-war impact on the educational system in Bosnia*, by Pašalić-Kreso (2008).

3.5.2 Features of the new system

Against the background described earlier, three highly problematic features of the new system emerged in 1996 creating immense challenges for the education reform: fragmentation, segregation, and politicisation.

a. Fragmentation

The absence of the central coordination body makes the state-level coordination of the education sector almost impossible. It also hinders the creation of an official national education statistics database that would track key education indicators (Magill, 2010). It should be noted that the authority for education decision-making in FBH rests not only with the cantonal Ministries, but has been, in the case of three 'mixed' cantons, shifted even further down to the local level to allow for monoethnic decision-making (Fisher, 2006). Fisher notes that "this allowed local authorities from all sides to strengthen their own power base within "their" areas and promote their own sectarian curricula" (ibid, p. 301).

b. Segregation

Developed along three ethnically defined lines, the education system effectively separates children and reduces contact and trust between them and between different education authorities. The segregation takes its most extreme form in the phenomena of "two schools under one roof", where children from different ethnic groups, mainly Bosniaks and Croat, attend classes in the same building, but are physically separated from each other and are taught two different curricula.⁹ In the immediate aftermath of the conflict, the OHR supported creation of these schools partly in response to the strong opposition from many returnee parents to have their children attend school with the different ethnic groups and partly due to lack of school infrastructure (Clark, 2010). The solution was to be short-term. However, the concept quickly gained traction amongst local political parties who encouraged relevant cantonal ministries to keep these schools in place, justifying the practice by linguistic differences between students. Despite the FBH Supreme Court ruling that the practice constitutes an act of ethnic segregation and discrimination, the 'two schools under one roof' continue to exist. In its 2015 report on education in Bosnia, the EU notes that "policies whose prime aim is to make discrimination part of the education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina supersede court rulings" (2015, p. 8).

c. Politicisation

The politicisation of education, defined as the extent to which actors external to the education system are able to direct or control the conduct of education (Thomas, 1983) is a common feature of education systems. The political influence is usually exerted over "the access to education; content and procedures of education and the latitude of social and political action permitted to the people who inhabit the schools" (ibid., p. 8). Furthermore, through education, future generations are inculcated with the political and ideological views that can sustain existing power relations and/or help promote new ideals for the society (be it democracy, authoritarianism, separatism, etc.). Not surprisingly, in a post-conflict setting education is often viewed by extreme nationalists and exponents of ethnic, faith or regional politics as a key political battleground (UNESCO, 2011).

Politicisation is the term most frequently used in the literature to describe Bosnia's education system. In this study, the term denotes the practice of using education as a platform for political power struggles that negatively affect the potential for education to be a vehicle of social transformation and peacebuilding.

⁹ 'Two schools under one roof' exist in three cantons in the FBH only: Central Bosnia Canton, Hercegovina-Neretva Canton, and Zenica-Doboj Canton.

The development of three separate curricula in the early years after the conflict was driven by the interest of political parties to promote the notion of separate identities and undermine the idea of one unified state. The curricula had a strong ethnic perspective, especially in the so-called 'national group of subjects' that include language and literature, nature and society, religious instruction, geography, and history. Bosnian Serb and the Bosnian Croat curricula were particularly problematic as they borrowed content from the neighbouring states and promoted the view that Serbia and Croatia, rather than Bosnia, were homelands for these ethnic groups. The separation of languages also serves to inculcate the idea of 'otherness' in the whole new generation of students entering schools after the conflict. Pašalić-Kreso (2008) argues that this situation is deliberately maintained by the politicians because 'it can be used for the purposes of political indoctrination enabling teachers, students, and indirectly, the students' parents, to be manipulated' (p.365).

At the school level, school boards are commonly controlled by the main political party (UN Human Rights Council, 2008). Political parties also exert pressure on the appointments of school directors who under the influence of politically motivated regional education authorities, "largely viewed themselves as decision-making leaders independent of local stakeholders" (parents and communities) (Komatsu, 2012, p. 156).

One exception to this situation is the northern self-governing province of Brčko which serves to highlight the possibilities of a different education system in Bosnia, and for this reason, it is briefly reviewed next.

3.5.3 The exceptional case of Brčko

Brčko District is part of BH state but exists as an autonomous district separate from FBH and RS. As the site of the most brutal ethnic cleansing, the decision on its status as part of FBH or RS was difficult to settle during the peace negotiations, so it was postponed to a later stage. In 1999, the arbitral tribunal ruled that Brčko should become a local, multi-ethnic unit of government, to be managed by the Office of High Representative (OHR) supervisory regime. The function of Principal Deputy High Representative was created for this purpose.

In the post-conflict period, Brčko education authorities took some innovative approaches to ensure teachers' support for the reform. For example, all teachers were dismissed and then re-hired under the condition that they sign a Code of Conduct committing them to support the new reforms; they were offered twice as high salaries as the teachers in other parts of the country; and they were given only short-term contracts which were

renewed bi-annually or annually to maintain their commitment (Clarke, 2011, Magill, 2010).

The new education law and the new curriculum adopted in 2011 obliged teachers to use all three languages in the classroom. As a result, students of different ethnicities receive instruction in their own languages while sitting in the same classroom. Over the years, the education system in Brčko developed under the OHR supervision into a vehicle for promoting peaceful coexistence between three ethnic groups.

Some observers argue that success of the educational reform in Brčko is a result of a high concentration of international community money, effort, attention, and technical assistance, and as such impossible to reproduce in the entire BH territory (Perry, 2003). However, others conclude that "with the requisite political will", the Brčko model may be applicable to the whole country (OSCE, 2007d, quoted in Magill, 2010, p. 35).

3.6 Education Reform (2001-2006)

The designation of the OSCE as the lead IO for education in 2001 signalled the start of the comprehensive reform process. The reform occurred against the background described earlier and in the context of three simultaneous transition processes: transition from war to peace; transition from the socialist, single-party system to capitalist multi-party democracy and transition towards membership in the EU (Perry, 2003). This section outlines key reform issues and challenges as well as the specific roles of IOs in the process.

3.6.1 Reform goals and selected results

At the start of the reform, IOs recognised several challenges that would become central to their reform efforts in the years to follow. In its 2001 situation analysis of the Bosnian education system, OSCE noted:

The present system of education, built upon the previous outdated pedagogic approach, is thus now organised in a way which reinforces a divided, post-conflict society, and the schools have become, actually or potentially, tools ready for use in the indoctrination of nationalist/religious xenophobia. ...Children in BH are now growing up and being shaped by this environment, in schools which are not only characterised by the type of curriculum they transmit, but also by whom this includes or excludes from the educational process. (OSCE 2001, p. 3)

Further focusing on the technical priorities, EU's assessment of the sector highlighted the following critical issues to be addressed: number of laws regulating education, insufficient funding for quality education, lack of educational standards, curricula that do not conform to EU requirements, outdated and obsolete school equipment, a shortage of teachers with certain educational backgrounds, overlap of competencies between the

MoEs and the Pedagogical Institutes, and the pre-service teacher training that did not meet the actual needs of teaching practices (EU, 2005).

Consequently, to jumpstart the reform process, in 2002 OSCE undertook a broad consultation with all national education authorities and international actors, which resulted in drafting of the *Education Reform Strategy: Message to the People of Bosnia and Herzegovina*. The strategy articulated five pledges by national and international actors (see Box 1). The strategy emphasized that the overriding objective of the reform is to depoliticise education while creating the conditions that will ensure equal access to a high-quality, modern education throughout Bosnia. As a result, international actors adopted an “apolitical approach to educational issues and reform, thus seeking to deny an opportunity for education to be hijacked in the furtherance of political agendas” (OSCE, 2001, p. 7). The apolitical approach and the focus on technical solutions, it was expected, would facilitate “increased prospects for consensus on educational issues and reform among political actors and, crucially, citizens – thus contributing to stability” (Ibid).

Pledge 1: Ensure that all children have access to quality education, in integrated multicultural schools, that is free from political, religious, cultural and other bias and discrimination and which respects the rights of all children.

Pledge 2: Provide basic education of good quality at the pre-school, primary and general secondary levels, with a modern curriculum and a modern system of assessment and certification for students and teachers. Ensure that students are taught by well-trained teachers, in properly equipped and efficiently managed schools.

Pledge 3: Support the economic development of Bosnia and Herzegovina through the development of a modern, broad-based, flexible and high-quality vocational education and training system that is responsive labour market requirements.

Pledge 4: Raise the quality of higher education and research in BH, significantly increase the number of people with access to higher education and ensure the full participation of the universities of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the European Higher Education Area.

Pledge 5: Ensure the transparent, equitable, cost-effective and financially sustainable investment of public resources, and implement education legislation at all levels that is based on European standards and norms and grounded in international human rights conventions.

Box 1: Reform Strategy Pledges

By 2006, the reform process initiated in 2001 resulted in several important outcomes in terms of coordination, legislation, and standards, including:

- Adoption in 2002 of the Interim Agreement on Accommodation of Specific Needs and Rights of Returnee Children, to help returnee students reclaim their right to education

in their original communities. It provided returnee parents with the option of having their children taught the national group of subjects according to their choice of curricula; provided conditions for the increased employment of returnee teachers; and stipulated that the ethnic composition of school boards should reflect the composition of the school population where schools were located.

- Adoption, at the state level, of the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary education in 2003 that incorporated two major reforms demanded by IOs – the removal of offensive content in textbooks (Art. 10), and a harmonisation of curricula (Art. 7). The law also imposed a single system of certificates and diplomas, thus facilitating exchange between schools within the country, which is particularly important to returnee children. As an important step in the harmonisation of the system, the Law introduced elements of the concurrent governance between the state and the entity levels by stipulating in the Article 59 that “all laws in the entities, cantons and the Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as other appropriate regulations in the area of education, shall be harmonized with the provisions of this Law”. The law authorised the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina (see next) to pass binding interim measures “if any of the prescribed obligations are not met within the periods determined in this Law (Art. 60).”
- Development in 2003 of the Shared Modernisation Strategy for Primary and General Secondary Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina White Paper, which emphasized technical issues of modernising education in Bosnia such as curriculum development, teacher training and standard-setting for evaluation and monitoring.
- Development of the Common Core Curriculum as prescribed by the Framework Law to ensure a minimum of common elements and to facilitate the mobility of pupils. All Ministers of Education bound themselves to introduce it in their area of responsibility as of the 2003-4 school year.

In its 2006 report EU also noted successes in the introduction of the output rather than input-oriented approach to planning and budgeting; adoption of new approaches to curriculum and syllabus development; and introduction of the new student-centred teaching methods.

Despite these legislative achievements, the reform seems to have been unsuccessful in dismantling the key features of the system – politicisation, fragmentation and segregation that persist to this day. In 2017, USAID noted that the objectives of the reform are not translated into operational guidance and/or not implemented due to political obstacles” adding that “coordination, which is an absolute necessity in such a decentralised and complex system, is still insufficient due to political obstacles and fundamental

disagreement on whether the education system should and can be harmonized” (USAID 2017, p.16). Perry (2015) commenting on the coordination bodies set up to improve fragmentation of the system notes that “in the absence of either a legal commitment to increasingly harmonise and integrate educational systems, or the political will to press for such an inclusive agenda, these bodies have been greatly limited in their work, and such reforms failed to touch the core problem of the divided curricula and the broader continued policy of ethnification of public life in BH” (p. 27).

The public perception of education’s influence on reconciliation and building of trust is even more telling. In the 2016 USAID’s National Survey of Citizens’ Perception (USAID 2017a), only 30 per cent of BH citizens stated that education plays a positive role in inter-ethnic trust in BH, while 26 per cent viewed education role as very or somewhat negative (See Figure 4).

For those IOs with high hopes and aspirations for Bosnia’s education system in 2001, these are some sobering statistics. An overview of their mandates and involvement in the reform is reviewed next.

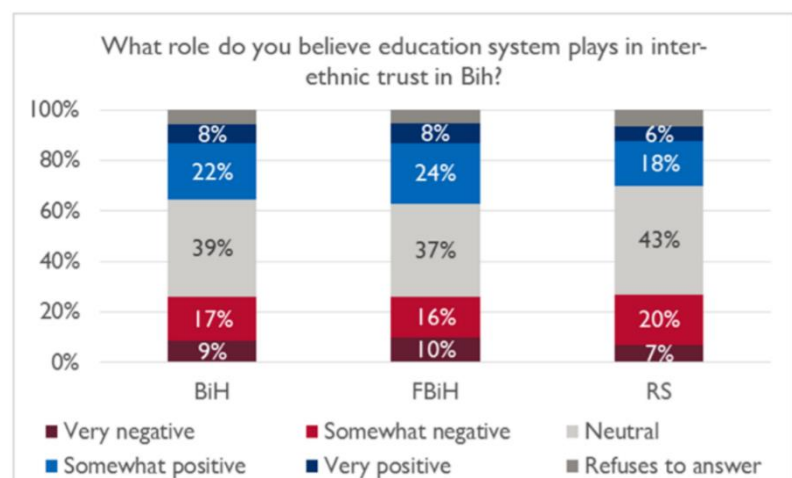


Figure 4: Perceived Role of Education System in Inter-Ethnic Trust. From *National Survey of Citizens’ Perceptions in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, by USAID, March 2017.

3.6.2 International Organisations involved in the Education Reform

The international development actors have heavily influenced the education policymaking process in Bosnia. While in the immediate aftermath of the conflict, the international community was hesitant to put the education reform on its agenda, restricting their activities to emergency relief and school construction (Fisher, 2006), but once the OSCE took leadership of the sector in 2001, several IOs became actively engaged in the reform process. OSCE lead the creation of the Education Issue Set Steering Group (EISSG) consisting of agency heads from the OSCE, OHR, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR, COE, EC, World Bank and others when necessary. Six working groups were established with the following chairs and members:

- Education Access and Non-Discrimination (OSCE/UNHCR)

- Quality and Modernization of Primary and General Secondary Education (UNICEF, UNESCO, EC TAER)
- Quality and Modernization of Vocational Education (EC/EU Vocational Education & Training)
- Quality and Modernization of Higher Education (EC)
- Education Financing and Management (World Bank/OSCE)
- Reform of Education Legislation (COE/OSCE)

The next section presents the overview of mandates and activities of these key actors (see Annex 7 for more details.)

Office of the High Representative (OHR)

The OHR, created in December 1995 to oversee the civilian implementation of the DPA, played an important political role, particularly in the early years of the peacebuilding process. From 1998 to 2002, the OHR played a central role in coordination of entity ministries and IOs, convening several conferences and meetings aimed at stimulating education reform processes. The OHR's effort brought about the signing of several inter-entity agreements that committed local ministers to the harmonisation of the curriculum.¹⁰ The OHR also played a role in the implementation of legislation and policies through the application of Bonn powers given to HR by the PIC.

Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

Despite its relative lack of experience and expertise in the education sector but thanks to its large field presence and political decision by OHR, in July 2002 OSCE was given the mandate for education coordination and reform. In the period from 2002-2006, OSCE lead a comprehensive effort to reform the education sector in Bosnia, which resulted, most notably, in the adoption of the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education. At the time of the writing of this study, OSCE continues to lead education-related work of the international community in Bosnia.

European Commission Technical Assistance to Education Reform (EC-TAER)

The EC provided technical assistance to several key pre-reform processes including development of the Shared Modernisation Strategy for Education (SMS), support to reform of Higher Education as well as reform of public administration. The most notable of all was the EC's three-year effort (2000-2002) to develop the SMS which articulated objectives and goals of the education reform in the areas of education content

¹⁰ These included: July 1999 Mostar "Agreement on the Removal of Objectionable Material from Textbooks"; August 1999 Banja Luka "Implementation Agreement" and May 2000 Inter-ministerial Education Declaration and Agreement aimed at harmonizing the segregated education systems

(curriculum, certification, standards, and assessment); capacity (teacher training and management); institutional development and legislation and finance. The strategy formed the basis from which the First Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education was developed. The EC promoted the introduction of EU policy in education, through the implementation of the Bologna Process and Lisbon Convention in Higher Education, and the Copenhagen Process in vocational education and training (Magill, 2010, p. 25). The EC stopped the funding of the EC-TAER in 2002.

The Council of Europe (COE)

The Council of Europe worked in coordination with the OHR and EC on various aspects of legislative and institutional strengthening as well as on citizenship and human rights education. It helped set up the Conference of Education Ministers as well as the Rectors conference. With the Ministry of Civil Affairs, COE worked on drafting the primary and secondary framework law as well as the higher education law. The COE remains an active player in the education field in Bosnia until the writing of this study.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

In 1996, UNHCR received from the OHR the mandate for refugee return. Its key operations in the years since then focused on promoting the sustainable voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons, to and within the country. In the education sector, before 2001, UNHCR mostly focused on rehabilitation of infrastructure in selected areas to which minorities were returning (UNHCR, 2001). As co-chair with OSCE of the EISSG working group on Education Access and Non-Discrimination, UNHCR played advisory role in the preparation of the 2003 Interim Agreement on Accommodation of Specific Needs and Rights of Returnee Children.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

From the end of the conflict onward, UNICEF remained consistently involved in the education reform. In the period examined in this study, UNICEF was the co-chair with EU of the working group on preschool, inclusive education and quality in education convened under EC-TACER SMS project (Interviewee 4). UNICEF also worked on the introduction and implementation of a sustainable quality inclusive education for children with disabilities (OSCE 2002a, p. 61).

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)

UNESCO's engagement in the reform processes in Bosnia started in 1998 when the organisation played a crucial role in the first curriculum review for Sarajevo. Later on, UNESCO assumed a substantial role in the European Commission-Technical

Assistance to Education Reform Shared Modernisation Strategy (EC-TAER SMS) project, concentrating on issues of general curriculum reform. While UNESCO holds a UN Mandate for education and has historically played the role of technical advisor on education reforms in many countries, its funding predicaments forced them to play a less prominent role in the education reform in Bosnia and close the education programme in the early 2000s.

The World Bank

The World Bank played the most prominent role in the education sector in the aftermath of the conflict when it provided support to infrastructure rebuilding and rehabilitation. From 2000 to 2004, the World Bank invested in improving the teaching and learning in BH schools; promoted professional cooperation and coordination in education across the three main constituent groups and supported the establishment of an Inter-Entity Standards Assessment Agency in October 2001, whose purpose was to assess the achievement of students in schools in BH against European standards. The Bank's education work in Bosnia focused on technical aspects of the reform.

3.7 Chapter Conclusion

The contextual overview presented in this Chapter offered a glimpse of the complex political, social, and economic setting in which IOs implemented Bosnia's post-conflict education reform. What emerges from the overview is that the case of Bosnia provides some important insights into the relationship between education and conflict, the role of education in peacebuilding, as well as suitability of some reform policies in the post-conflict setting.

The key issues emerging from the context analysis and the literature findings presented in Chapter 2 formed the basis for articulating the Research Questions for this study. They were presented briefly in the Introduction and are elaborated in the next Chapter.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

This Chapter describes the research paradigm, methodology and methods used in this study. Section 4.1 explains the process of arriving at research questions. Sections 4.2 and 4.3 describe the research paradigm and research design, respectively. The subsequent Sections outline methods used (Section 4.4); the process of data collection (Section 4.5) and the analysis (Section 4.6). Section 4.7 describes how the quality of research was assured. The Chapter concludes with reflections on my positionality (Section 4.8) and ethical considerations that guided the research (Section 4.9).

4.1 Research Questions

The overall aim of this research is to investigate policymaking processes in the context of a post-conflict peacebuilding process. Specifically, the study explores the role of IOs in the 2001-2006 education system reform in Bosnia; their understanding of education's contribution to peacebuilding; their approaches to policy development and their ability to influence and promote the creation of the education system that would contribute to sustainable peace.

The main research question (RQ) asks: what was the role of the international community, who managed the education reform process, in promoting reconciliation and sustainable peace through education? Two sub-research questions (sub-RQs) formulated based on the literature review guided the study (see Figure 5).

The first sub-research questions (sub-RQ1) asks, *what were the key features of IOs involvement in Bosnia's first post-conflict education reform?* This question seeks to understand the key features of IOs engagement in the policy formulation by exploring political vs technical aspects of their involvement; their choices of short-term vs long-term technical assistance; their staff work experience in conflict-affected setting; and finally, their choice of leadership. To answer the sub-RQ1, the study looked at the three issues framed as questions, which are listed below.

- How did the key international players engage with the reform process?
- What have been the key assumptions and expectations of different international actors in the development of the reform?
- What have been the tensions and contradictions between IOs in relation to the reform process?

Rizvi and Lingard's table of key questions for policy analysis and analysis of policy, which suggests that analysing IO engagement entails investigation of such aspects, was used in the study (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010)

The second sub-research questions (sub-RQ2) asks, *whether and how did IOs seek to embed peacebuilding outcomes in the education reform process?* This question aims to uncover whether the IOs engaged in the reform process recognised the risk that the education system, decentralised along three ethno-centric lines, may undermine prospects for sustainable peace and whether and how they tried to mitigate that risk. Against the literature review finding that IOs tend to use generic approaches and focus on technical aspects of the reform, rather than engage with the issues relevant to peacebuilding process, such as the root causes of the conflict, social cohesion and reconciliation, the following two issues framed as questions, were investigated to answer sub-RQ2:

- What were the key obstacles IOs faced to ensure that the education system does no harm to social cohesion and reconciliation?
- What options have been considered by IOs to balance the imperatives of unity and diversity?

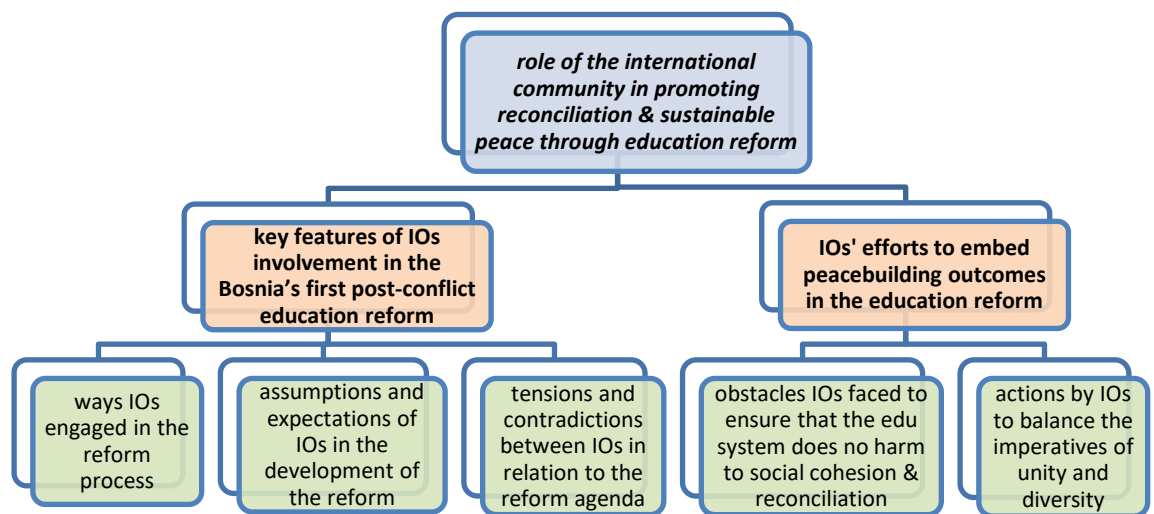


Figure 5: RQ, sub-RQs and issues examined

4.2 Research Paradigm

According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), a paradigm 'represents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the "world", the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts' (). The specific paradigm reveals

researcher's fundamental belief system that emerges from her/his ontological (what is the form and nature of reality), epistemological (what can be known) and methodological (how can researcher go about finding what he/she believes can be known) assumptions. The most common paradigms in social science research are positivism, post-positivism, interpretivism and critical post-modernism (which combines critical theory with post-modern thought) (Gephart, 1999, Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

This study is embedded in the interpretive research paradigm that seeks to "understand the actual production of meanings and concepts used by social actors in a given context" (Rynes & Gephart, 2004, p. 457). The constructivist ontology of this paradigm assumes that diverse meanings exist and influence how people negotiate the objective world. These different meanings then produce and sustain a sense of truth (ibid.) However, notions of objectivity are not rejected and "pluralism, not relativism, is stressed with focus on the circular dynamic tension of subject and object" (Crabtree & Miller, 1999, p. 10). At the same time, the epistemology of the study is transactional and subjectivist which assumes that "what can be known is inextricably intertwined with the interaction between a particular investigator and a particular object or group" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 110). Consequently, the knowledge in this research "consists of those constructions about which there is a relative consensus (or at least some movement towards consensus) among those competent to interpret the substance of the construction" (ibid., p. 113).

The subject of the study influenced the choice of research paradigm. As I sought to understand the dynamic process of agenda setting and policy formulation, I was inevitably engaged in questioning the assumptions, values, and ideologies of IO policymakers. I focused on exploring how they understood the policy reform process and how their understanding of Bosnian political, social, and cultural context as well as the purpose and role of education in peacebuilding, influenced the choices they made and actions they took. Furthermore, I was concerned with the implications of different meanings my informants created of the specific situation for their social interactions (Rynes & Gephart, 2004). An interpretivist approach was in my view the most appropriate as it involves generating understanding of actions based on participants' own perceptions and seeks to interrogate how people make sense of the social reality around them (Blundell, 2014). Taking an interpretivist stance, I was not only interested in understanding "how members of a social group interpret the world around them" but also aimed "to place the interpretations that have been elicited into the social scientific frame", (Bryman 2016, p. 31). This meant placing my own interpretations against the concepts and theories I found in literature.

As an interpretivist researcher, I also recognized that value-free inquiry is not possible since research is inevitably influenced both by researcher's as well as experiences of the subjects of the research (Walsham, 1995). Indeed, in data analysis, I was keenly aware that I was interpreting the interpretations of my informants. As described later in Section 4.8, my insider/outsider status as a researcher and my personal and professional background also influenced the findings of this study. Furthermore, I understand that the meaning-making happens in and is shaped by the context within which it is created.

Another important concern of this research was the influence of the political, cultural, and social contexts on the choices that policymakers made. I also explored the power relations that allowed some actors' worldviews to dominate the policymaking process - this aided in understanding how those dynamics may have influenced the outcomes of the policy development. The critical theory research paradigms resonated with this aim as they question and evaluate the social, cultural, and political assumptions underlying the phenomena being researched. The "critical research uncovers facts about power relations that are obscure to societal members" (Rynes & Gephart, 2004, p. 457). Critical research also assumes the multiple views of the world and employs interpretive methodologies to uncover divergent meanings held by groups in power-laden relationships (ibid). Therefore, my interpretivist research paradigm is complemented by the critical research one.

Through the critical policy analysis approach (CPA) I aimed not only to establish what happened and understand why actors did what they did but also to generate some conclusions on how the process can be changed or improved. In this study, the critical theory helped me recognise how the underlying assumptions, values, and beliefs of key international policymakers influenced their choices and actions.

The research methodology is closely linked to the research paradigm chosen and reflects how the researcher goes about finding whatever she or he believes can be known (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Two primary methodologies are used in social research – quantitative and qualitative. According to Stake (1995), the two differ in three major ways: purpose of inquiry (explanation vs. understanding); the role of the researcher (impersonal or personal); and type of knowledge (discovered vs. constructed).. Given the ontological and epistemological paradigms for this study described above, **qualitative methodology** was deemed most appropriate. Through the study I sought to *understand* the role of IOs in a policymaking process through a personal research involvement with the key IO actors, which resulted in the construction of new knowledge. Furthermore, the research conducted was inductive as I was interested in generating new insights from my data rather than testing a specific hypothesis.

4.3 Research Design

The choice of research design reflects how the researcher prioritises the following four research aims: “expressing causal connections between variables; generalising to larger groups of individuals than those forming part of the investigation; understanding behaviour and meaning of behaviour in its specific social context; and having temporal appreciation of social phenomena and their interconnection” (Bryman, 2016, p. 40). Based on these criteria, the researcher will choose between several types of design that may include experimental, cross-sectional, longitudinal, case study and comparative designs (ibid., p. 70).

Of the four priorities described by Bryman, this study focused mostly on the third one. The primary purpose of this research was to understand the behaviour of IO actors involved in the reform process in the specific period when the post-conflict reform was being conceived and developed. Therefore, I decided to use an instrumental **case study design** focusing on answering “how” and “why” questions and addressing contextual conditions as they relate to the phenomenon under study (Yin, 2003). The case study also aligns with my interpretivist research paradigm.

Contexts are unique, and case studies can be useful tools to help us understand the complex dynamic and unfolding interactions of events, human relationships, and other factors in a temporally, geographically, institutionally bounded space (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). In the case of this research, I studied the role of IOs in the education policymaking process in post-conflict. Bosnia served as a relevant setting, having gone through the IO-lead education reform process. I have chosen the instrumental case study that is generally used to provide an insight into an issue or help to refine a theory (Stake, 1995). As opposed to an intrinsic case study that is focused on the case itself, an instrumental case study uses the case to pursue secondary interest, i.e. understanding of something else (ibid.).

The value of the case study approach in social science research has often been criticised for being methodologically unsound on several grounds: one cannot generalise from a single case study; a case study is useful for generating hypothesis but not theory testing; and case may contain bias toward verification (Bryman, 2016, Frybjerg, 2006).

Several counter-arguments are presented in response to these critiques. Firstly, case studies are intensive examinations of a single case and are not necessarily intended to generalize to other cases or populations beyond the case (Bryman, 2016). Flyvbjerg (2006) goes beyond that notion demonstrating that a case study can aid in generalising by performing the falsification test and thus help both hypotheses generating as well as

testing. As for the presumed tendency of researchers to use case studies to confirm their perceived notions (verification), he further notes that many a researcher has emerged out of case study research with revised original hypothesis and that a case study is more often characterised by falsification than verification (Flyvbjerg, 2006). While the case of IO involvement in Bosnia's post-conflict policymaking may be similar to other settings and the findings could be compared with those, this study does not aim to generalise but rather describe how and why the policymaking process in Bosnia unfolded the way it did.

4.4 Research Methods

Research method represents a technique for collecting data (Bryman, 2016). In the development of a case study, a variety of methods and sources of evidence can be used to shed light on the phenomenon under investigation. Two research methods were deemed especially suitable for this study: **semi-structured interviews and documentary review**. The selection of these methods was guided by the purpose of the research, its design, and methodology. Firstly, the analysis of the policy development required both examining the role of actors involved in the process and the texts produced as the outcome of that process. Secondly, qualitative methodology and case study design of this interpretivist research relied on close interactions with the subjects of study (in this case IO policymakers) as well as with the products of their work (texts produced). Interviews combined with documentary review aided in triangulation which "entails using more than one method or source of data in the study of social phenomena" (Bryman, 2012, p. 392). This was particularly useful in establishing the chronology of events, confirming the involvement of IOs in specific policy decisions or documents drafting. Triangulation helped "corroborate findings across data sets and thus reduce the impact of potential biases that can exist in a single study" (Bowen, 2009, p.28).

Semi-structured Interviews

Interviewing defined as "a time- and space-bounded interaction between (usually) two individuals, who come to the event with very different backgrounds, different forms of capital and different expectations of the process" (Greif, 2011, p.1), was used in this study as the primary data collection method. While the interview types can be categorized in several ways, most often used typology is one based on their structure. There are three types of interviews commonly used in qualitative data collection: structured, unstructured and semi-structured.

A structured interview, also known as a standardized interview, aims to give all interviewees the same context of questioning in order to ensure that all replies can be reliably aggregated (Bryman, 2016). It is typically used in surveys as it promotes

standardization of both asking the questions and recording of answers. On the opposite end of the spectrum are unstructured interviews, in which "the interviewer typically has only a list of topics or issues, often called an interview guide or aide-mémoire, that are to be covered" (ibid., p.213). The sequencing of questions and their phrasing may vary from interview to interview. Unstructured interviews are often used in the ethnographic research and can be further divided into oral history, creative interviews and postmodern interviews (Fontana & Frey, 1994).

Bryman (2016) explains that semi-structured interview

refers to a context in which the interviewer has a series of questions that are in the general form of an interview schedule but is able to vary the sequence of questions. ... the interviewer usually has some latitude to ask further questions in response to what are seen as significant replies. (p. 212)

This type of interview, which allows for open-ended questions while keeping the structure and comparability through several pre-set questions, was deemed more appropriate for this study than the structured or unstructured type. There were two reasons for this. Firstly, it allowed me to probe deeper the unexpected issues that arose from informants' accounts of events, thus resulting in a richer data set. Secondly, given that these were elite interviews, I needed the flexibility of a semi-structured interview when the informants would avoid answering specific questions but were willing to speak about different aspects of the issue.

Documentary Review

In qualitative research, documents are an important source of data serving different purposes. For example, they "provide background and context, additional questions to be asked, supplementary data, a means of tracking change and development, and verification of findings from other data sources" (Bowen, 2009, pp. 30-31). Documents are particularly useful means of gathering data when events can no longer be observed or when informants have forgotten the details (ibid).

Documentary review is a qualitative research method that involves examination and interpretation of written data in order to "uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem" (Merriam, 1988, quoted in Bowen, 2009, p.29). The particular advantages of the documentary review noted by Bowen (2009) are its:

- Efficiency: documentary review is less time-consuming, requiring data selection, rather than data collection;
- Availability: many documents are available in the public domain
- Cost-effectiveness: documentary review is less costly than other research methods

- Lack of obtrusiveness and reactivity: documents are ‘unobtrusive’ and ‘non-reactive’—that is, they are unaffected by the research process
- Stability: As a corollary to being non-reactive, documents are stable, meaning that the investigator’s presence does not alter what is being studied

Documentary review was used in this case study as it was particularly important to rely on multiple data sources to provide a detailed description of the issues being studied. Documentary review supplemented information gathered through interviews and aided in the process of triangulation, supporting the credibility of research. The process of document collection is further detailed in Section 4.5.

4.5 Data Collection

4.5.1 Sources of data

The sources of data in research can be classified into primary and secondary. A primary source provides direct or first-hand account about an event, object or person and enables researchers to get as close as possible to what happened during a particular event or time period (Cohen et al., 2007, Santiago Canyon College [SCC], 2018). Examples of primary source are autobiographies and memoirs, diaries, personal letters and correspondence, interviews, surveys, focus groups, public opinion polls, census statistics, official records of organisations and government documents (SCC, 2018).

Secondary sources describe, discuss, interpret, analyse, evaluate, and summarize primary sources and are generally one or more steps removed from the event or time period. They are usually written or produced after the fact and with the benefit of hindsight. Examples of secondary sources are biographical works, reference books and encyclopaedias, articles from magazines, journals, and newspapers, literature reviews, academic books and articles, textbooks, documentaries, films, and radio programmes (ibid.).

In line with its research methods, this study used both primary (interviews and official government or IO documents) and secondary sources of data (academic articles, literature reviews and journal articles). The next Section describes the process of collecting data through interviews and through documentary review.

4.5.2 Data collection: Interviews

Sampling of Informants for Interviews

Purposive sampling that aims “to sample cases/participants in a strategic way so that those samples are relevant to the research questions that are posed” (Bryman, 2016, p. 408) was used in this study. Furthermore, criterion sampling, a type of purposive sampling, was applied as it involves “sampling units (cases or individuals) that meet a particular criterion” (Patton, 1990 and Palys, 2008, quoted in Bryman 2016, p. 409).

Consequently, only the key IO actors involved in the reform process were selected “based on the anticipated richness and relevance of information in relation to the study’s research questions” (Yin, 2011, p.311). I used the following four criteria for the selection:

- Informant was IO staff or consultant working specifically on education issues
- Informant was an international staff
- Informant was a national staff but lead education portfolio on behalf of the IO
- Informant was present in Bosnia for at least one year between 2001 and 2006

The sampling criteria did not include gender because the informant’s role and the position within the organisation and the extent of their participation in the reform process were key criteria for selection. However, the gender balance was fortuitously achieved with four male and four female informants participating in the interviews.

The process of identifying informants started with the guidance from a UNICEF BH colleague, who participated in the reform process and thus was able to provide names of key IO policymakers also involved. Nine persons were suggested, five of whom met the criteria mentioned above. I contacted them and secured interviews almost immediately (see Section 4.9 for the process of contacting the informants). Once the interviews started, that list of potential sources was expanded through suggestions received from the informants themselves. While this may appear to be ‘snowball sampling’, it was still a very purposeful criterion sampling approach as I kept applying my criteria to the selection. In total, twelve informants have been identified based on the criteria above, but due to their unavailability or refusal to participate, four could not be included in the study.

Conducting Interviews

Eight interviews with IO representatives who directly participated in the reform process were conducted in the period from August 2015 to October 2017 (see Annex 1 for details on the informants including IOs they represented, seniority and tenure in BH). The length of data collection was determined by the availability of key informants, some of whom became available only after a protracted wait.

A semi-structured interview protocol was developed to ensure consistency and reliability in the interview process. Following the first two interviews, original questions were modified to sharpen focus (see Annex 2 for interview questions). The interview was organised around three different areas that were directly aligned with the main and sub-research questions:

- Part 1 (questions 1-3) sought to understand informants’ professional background and experience as a way to understand their capacities (Sub-RQ1)

- Part 2 (questions 4-13) focused on their actions and engagement in the policy development process as a way of understanding the obstacles to the social cohesion and sustainable peace outcomes of the reform, and the actions they considered or took to balance the imperatives of unity and diversity (Sub-RQ2)
- Part 3 (questions 14-15) solicited any lessons learned, reflections on their roles and choices they made as well as assumptions and beliefs (Main RQ)

While interviews tended to flow as per pre-drafted questions, a good degree of flexibility was applied in the conversation - I let informants offer their perspectives and tell the story in the way they felt most comfortable.

Challenges in the interviewing process

Three specific challenges in the data collection through interviews need to be highlighted. They related to the fact that interviews were conducted through Skype; interviews required a great degree of recall on the part of informants of events that occurred 12-15 years prior; and interviews involved elites, IO leaders and key policymakers in the reform. Below describes how I addressed these challenges throughout data collection.

Skype interviews

There are as many *pros* as there are *cons* in conducting interviews by Skype. Advantages include low/no cost, easier access, and reduced verbal/visual status differences, while disadvantages involve external distractions that researchers may not be aware of that cause disengagement, or no verbal/visual cues to notice, which may prevent building of a rapport with informants (Cohen et al., 2007). Also, similar to the phone interviews, Skype interviews tend to be shorter than the face to face ones (Cohen et al., 2007).

To minimise these negative effects, I gathered as much 'general' information about informants' position and role in the process before the actual interview leaving more time for us to focus on the questions related to the process. I also shared all the questions beforehand, giving them time to reflect, recall, and think about the conversation. During the interviews, I was aware of the threat to dependability related to the lack of non-verbal cues and social interactions typical of telephone communication (Cohen et al., 2007). To counter this, I used Skype video feature to create some 'face time' and build rapport with my informants, although this was often possible only for the first few minutes as videos diminished quality of the call. At the same time, I relied on the contention by some authors that the very fact that interviews are not face-to-face may strengthen their reliability, as the interviewee might disclose information that may not be so readily forthcoming in a face-to-face situation (Miller & Cannell, 1997). Bryman (2016) confirms the view that

“asking sensitive questions by telephone will be more effective, since interviewees may be less distressed about answering when the interviewer is not physically present” (p. 488).

Recall of past events

The challenge of gathering information on the events that happened over a decade ago was overcome by stimulated recall technique in cases where informants acknowledged in advance that their memory was not clear. In preparation for those interviews, I shared policy documents that helped jog informants' memory. In order to avoid informants mixing up the views, assessments and positions resulting from Bosnian work experiences with those that may have happened later on in their life, at the start of each interview I asked informants to focus only on their Bosnian experience.

Batteson and Ball (1995) point out that the slippage of memory is not only a technical issue but that “the ‘memory’ is a medium for the construction and reconstruction of personal history and experience” (p. 204). This points to the need for researchers to maintain healthy scepticism and caution when interpreting the interviews where historical events are being recollected.

Interviewing elites

Finally, this study falls into the category of elite studies that “usually involve interviews with the major policy players as a way of understanding policy texts and policy processes across the policy cycle” (Maguire & Ball, 1994, quoted in Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 58). Elite studies recognise the politics involved inside the actual site of policy production itself and it is precisely because of these sensitive political issues that interviewing elites presents a specific challenge (ibid.). Batteson and Ball (1995) describe key features of the interviewee-researcher dynamics in elite interviews as follows:

In practical terms, this may be experienced in the way respondents are confident in regulating openness (“good at being interviewed” (Ball, 1993, p. 2); can invalidate lines of inquiry (signal “that is the wrong question” (ibid, p. 8)); deflect the inappropriate (are “skilled avoiders of answers they do not wish to give” (ibid.)). Apparent ease of accessibility and openness of members of policy elites as “storytellers” (ibid., p. 10) might accomplish a weaving of a narrative of justification - legitimisation of a perspective through revelation by recipe or by asserting an incontestable agenda (achieved through “a mixture of anecdote, narrative, personal comment and commentary” (ibid., p. 12). (1995, p.203)

I was keenly aware of these dynamics and recognised some of these features in my interviews. The tendency of an informant to avoid a line of questioning, I countered by rephrasing the question or stopping the inquiry and getting back to it at a later point. It was not always straightforward nor successful, but for the most part, I managed to get

the information I sought. The 'narrative of justification' was also present in some interviews where informants repeatedly explained events or their positions by rationalising their actions and apportioning responsibility to others or the structural constraints they were facing. At the level of analysis, this was managed through triangulation, other informants' testimonies and documentary sources that offered the opportunity for cross-referencing and comparison.

While access is often mentioned as the challenge in elite interviews, it was not a significant issue in the case of this study. The earlier described delay in securing some informants stemmed less from their unwillingness to talk and more from the fact that I was focusing on a particular group of people, so chosen informants could not be substituted by anyone else. As a result, I spent considerable time trying to gain access to the person who was unavailable for personal reasons, but who once available was willing to speak to me.

Ozga and Gewirtz (1994) point out that getting access to the retired powerful is easier than to those who currently hold power. At the same time interviewing retired elites has its downside in that "they may be attempting to 'write themselves into history' and to ascribe importance to their own actions that is unjustified" (Walford 2012, p. 112). Both of these assertions held true to a degree in this study. As mentioned earlier, the issue of interviewees rationalising their actions was taken into consideration, especially when their explanations tended to seemingly shift the responsibility onto other parties or broader political and social environment within which they operated.

Finally, the issues of power asymmetry may affect elite interviews. Cassell (1993) suggests that elites and influential people might feel demeaned or insulted when being interviewed by those with a lower status or less power (quoted in Cohen et al., 2007). This study, however, was not affected by the power asymmetry issues, confirming assertion by Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) that in the situations where the researchers and interviewees are peers, however influential the latter may be, they will offer a degree of reciprocity to the former. I also mitigated the risks described by Cassell by going into an interview well prepared and knowledgeable about interviewees' work and their organisations', eliminating the perception of inexperience or lack of knowledge that commonly widens the 'power gap'.

4.5.2 Data collection: Documents

Selection of Documents

To select relevant policy documents for the study, I conducted an initial desk-review of documents related to the education policy reform produced by the Bosnian authorities

and IOs. Document selection was conducted through the snowballing approach. I initially selected only three key policy documents for the analysis, but during interviews, informants brought to my attention other relevant documentation, so I added those to the analysis. The six documents were selected for closer analysis based on the following criteria:

- Document is an official record or outcome of the reform process;
- Document has can provide insight into key aspects of the education reform

The six documents analysed are (see Annex 5 for summary of document content):

1. Agreement on the Removal of Objectionable Material from Textbooks and Implementation Agreement (1999)
2. Inter-ministerial Education Declaration and Agreement aimed at harmonizing the segregated education systems (2000)
3. Education Reform Strategy: Message to the People of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2002)
4. The Interim Agreement on Accommodation of Specific Needs and Rights of Returnee Children (2003)
5. Shared Modernisation Strategy for Primary and General Secondary Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, White Paper, (2003)
6. Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in Bosnia Herzegovina, (2003).

The six selected documents demonstrate policy and legislative attempts to mitigate against system segregation, guarantee education rights to all children regardless of their ethnic/minority identity and outline prioritised reform objectives and approaches of the reform. As such, they aided me in answering the two sub-RQs and main RQ.

The six documents selected were reviewed through the process of content analysis and read with the critical approach described in Section 4.6.

In addition to the official policy documents, I drew upon a number of secondary data including IO reports and press statements available on their website, news reports and articles from the local media, press conference transcripts, etc. (See Annex 6.)

4.6 Data analysis

4.6.1 The process of content analysis

Having assembled eight fully transcribed interviews (about 100 pages of text) and six policy documents described earlier, I began the content analysis of these materials. Content analysis “takes texts and analyses, reduces and interrogates them into summary form through the use of both pre-existing categories and emergent themes” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 476). Krippendorff (2004) highlights an important feature of the texts in the context of the content analysis - that texts have no objective reader-independent qualities; rather they have multiple meaning and can sustain multiple readings and interpretations (quoted in Cohen et al., 2007). This meant that the meanings have to be drawn in context.

The four key actions defined the analysis process:

- coding,
- categorizing,
- comparing categories,
- drawing theoretical conclusions from the text (Cohen et al., 2007).

With research questions defined (see section 1) and unit of analysis identified (single interview transcript and a policy document), I developed a set of tentative codes based on my research questions and theoretical framework. The CPA approach to policy analysis used in this study (See Chapter 2) meant that in the identification of tentative codes and further reading of the interview transcripts and documents, I focused on the themes of power dynamics between the policymakers; their assumptions; the sites of policy production (global, national, local), and evidence of how specific policymakers’ assumptions may have either supported or undermined the values of peace and social justice. I used thematic analysis, which is a form of pattern recognition within the data, with emerging themes becoming the categories for analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006 quoted in Bowen, 2009). The themes I identified were aligned with the research questions.

Interpretive research is inductive in nature, so I also recognised the need to allow the codes to emerge from the texts themselves as well as the summary notes I wrote after each interview. Each interview transcript and policy document were then coded, and as expected, new codes emerged as I read and read the texts. Through re-reading of texts and marking of codes, I noticed the frequency of codes and patterns (Cohen et al., 2007,

p. 478) and began grouping them into categories or themes. These themes were linked across the units of analysis (interviews and policy documents).

The themes were matched with the specific research questions and cross-referenced where they applied to more than one question. For example, reflections on the effect of decentralised education structure on reconciliation were informing inquiry about IO assumptions about and expectations for the reform (RQ1b) but were also related to understanding the key obstacles to ensuring that the system does no harm to social cohesion/reconciliation (RQ2a).

4.6.2 The interpretation

I organized the analysis by research question which allowed me “to draw together all the relevant data for the exact issue of concern” and enabled “patterns, relationships, comparisons and qualifications across data types to be explored conveniently and clearly” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 468). As the semi-final step, I summarised the major themes (for example Perceptions on Decentralisation; Emphasis on Technical Reform or Local Actors Obstructionist Attitudes) that have been brought out by the data and then moved from description to making inferences. Some themes, such as ‘decentralisation’, landed themselves to easier summarising as the informants offered uniform perceptions. In others, such as ‘technical reform’, divergent positions required further reflections and careful writing to ensure that all perceptions were captured accurately. The themes were linked to the literature, discussed, and reviewed. As the observations were emerging, I linked them to the broader issues from the literature review (Chapter 2) and discussed how they relate to what has literature has been showing (Chapter 7).

As it was noted in the previous section, interviewing elites brings a specific set of challenges that relate not only to data collection but also to data analysis. In this regard, Ball (1994) is instructive in pointing out that “in interviews with powerful policy-makers, researchers need to recognize and explore more fully the interview as the ‘play of power’. Those with power have vested interests that they wish to protect and are skilled interviewees” (quoted in Walford, 2012, p. 113). However, on this point, rather than wrestling with the question of whether the informants were telling me everything (or being truthful), I recognised that my aim was not to uncover one objective reality, but rather to understand competing perspectives the informants brought and that “understanding these relationships is part of understanding the positions of those who are interviewed” (Walford, 2012, p. 116).

In the analysis and interpretation of data found in documents, I considered that “what is significant is not only what a document contains, but what it omits” (Dunne et al., 2005,

p. 115). In describing the process of critical policy analysis, Rizvi and Lingard (2010) also note that the silences in policy texts tell us a lot about power. They note that "to fully understand the written text the policy analyst has to 'world' the text, situate it in its context" (Rizvi & Lingard 2010, p. 67). My document analysis includes gaps and omissions as presented in Sections 5.3.1 and 6.3.4.

I also considered the issue of 'reality' in legislative and policy documents I read. Bryman (2012) cautions against seeing them as the full reflection of an underlying social reality and recommends examining documents in terms of the context in which they were produced and their implied readership. This was an important insight for my analysis given the strong influence of IOs on the preparation and drafting of most legal and policy documents. The questions I kept in mind while reading and reading the texts were: who is really speaking through these documents, the IO staff or their national counterparts, and if the latter, whose social reality or multiple realities are they reflecting? On this point, Dunne et al. (2005) note that

policies often aim to reorder our real worlds and our social practices and what they mean. This intention is encoded in policy documents that have a special relationship with reality: ideally, what is real will come to mirror the desires that inhere in the document. (p.110-111)

In this sense, the documents provided an insight into how the IOs, principle drafters of the texts, desired to reorder the social practices of education stakeholders in Bosnia.

Finally, as mentioned earlier in discussing recall in interviews, the use of written historical documents, specifically policy documents, comes with inherent "impossibility of addressing whether what was said and discussed may be as or more important than what was formally recorded or documented" (Batteson and Ball 1995, p. 204). These challenges in interpretation were addressed by using secondary resources and through comparison of other informant accounts.

4.7 Trustworthiness of Research

Qualitative research has commonly been evaluated through the criteria of validity and reliability. However, the appropriateness of this criteria, which have their origin in quantitative research, for assessing qualitative studies has been questioned. As a result, the alternative criterion of *trustworthiness* has been proposed, which involves establishing credibility; transferability; dependability; and confirmability (Bryman, 2016, Lincoln & Guba, 1985). While trustworthiness criteria may still not be a perfect solution for they parallel the positivist criteria of internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity, their inherent acknowledgement of the ontological and epistemological

grounding of qualitative studies, makes them a useful tool for assessing the quality of such research.

In evaluating this interpretivist study, I kept in mind its aim, which was to understand and to reconstruct, and its epistemological and ontological grounding that understands the reality to be relative to meaning that people attach to phenomena and the knowledge to be co-constructed. From this perspective, it is never possible to fully ensure trustworthiness. Next, however, I will explain how I guarded against these limitations using the four criteria of trustworthiness.

Credibility is related to the evidence of the 'truth' of the findings. As mentioned above, it is difficult for the study situated in the interpretivist research paradigm to meet this criterion. However, I used two strategies suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to establish credibility. In my data analysis, I used methodological triangulation - defined as the use of two or more methods of data collection in order to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint (Cohen et al., 2007). Documentary/text analysis and interviews conducted served to complement each other and to substantiate (or not) the findings. In the data analysis stage, I continuously reflected on the data I was generating and interpreting being constantly aware of the potential bias that can emerge from my positionality (see next section).

Transferability is related to the generalisation of the study findings to other contexts. While it is almost impossible to generalise the findings from a single case study, to improve its transferability, in this study I used 'thick description' approach. As several authors point out, by describing a phenomenon in sufficient detail, the researcher can allow readers and users of data to evaluate the extent to which the conclusions drawn are transferable to other times, settings, situations, and people (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, Schofield, 1990). I used longer quotes from the interviews or documents to strengthen transferability of this research.

Dependability requires findings to be consistent and to be repeated. This is another tough task for qualitative research that studies human behaviour, attitudes, and meaning-making, which are intrinsically in continuous flux. As a result, it will always be difficult to tell whether the same study with same informants would produce the same results. To increase dependability, however, I have provided in this Chapter a detailed description of my assumptions and my research process, to allow for needed audit should any of the findings be contested.

Confirmability of data was addressed through both triangulation and reflexivity (described in the next section), which I applied throughout the research. The approach I took was that of "investigator triangulation" (Denzin, 1978) in which involvement of multiple observers, my informants, was used to attempt "to secure as many differing views as possible on the behaviour in question" (p. 102). I continuously compared the information from documentary sources and the views I gathered from my informants, in order to obtain varying perspectives and gain a full understanding of an issue. Furthermore, content analysis of texts conducted for this study, especially the key documents which are publicly available, ensures that data is verifiable. As Cohen et al. (2007) point out "as the data are in permanent form (texts), verification through reanalysis and replication is possible" (p. 476).

4.8 Positionality

As Cohen et al. (2007) note "in qualitative data the analysis here is almost inevitably interpretive, hence the data analysis is less a completely accurate representation (as in numerical positivist tradition) but more of a reflexive, reactive interaction between the researcher and the decontextualized data that are already interpretations of a social encounter" (p. 469). Reflexivity plays an essential part in ensuring reliability and validity of qualitative research. As stated by Rizvi and Lingard (2010),

Reflexivity demands transparent articulation of researcher positionality and the significance of this to data collection and analysis. Bourdieu (1999), for instance, has spoken of the need to reject 'epistemological innocence', a stance which can be compared with Appadurai's (2001) call for 'epistemological diffidence' and Smith's (1999) talk of the need for 'epistemological openness'. Such a rejection of epistemological innocence demands that researchers articulate their positioning within the research, in terms of their value stances, their problem choice, and their theoretical and methodological frames. (pp. 48-49)

Three aspects of my personal and professional background influenced my positionality in this research: I have been working for IOs for over twenty years; I have been closely involved in the education reform process of another conflict-affected country and I am Bosnian. My professional and personal background make this partly an 'insider' research that entails specific relationship between researchers and participants who share a similar cultural, linguistic, ethnic, national heritage and/or professional background (Ganga & Scott, 2006). I dealt with these aspects of my positionality in the following way.

Firstly, as an IO staff of twenty years, I was afforded a 'peer' status that came with some benefits. The informants generally responded quickly to my request for interviews and shared documentation, which may not have been the case had I just been a student researcher. I also had no problem establishing a personal connection with informants, as we shared professional experiences, so a degree of comradeship was present in each

rapport. At the same time, I was aware that the 'peer' status could have some drawbacks – since I came from the family of IOs, some informants may have been less open to share all the details of their activities for the sake of protecting their organisation's or their personal reputation. This was less an issue with several informants who had retired and/or no longer worked in the international development arena.

Secondly, as an education professional engaged in education policy development in conflict-affected settings, I am very familiar with all aspects of my informants' work and could relate to their experiences. For instance, I am all too aware of the complexities in managing the relationship with national stakeholders, or the tendency of IOs to engage in turf wars. I am also aware of the uneven distribution of power between IOs in policy discussion that is often relative to their reputation or financial investment they make in a given country. This familiarity with the issues had the potential to influence both my interviews and my data analysis and conclusion. I had to guard against generalisations and tendency to project my own opinion on the data I was analysing. I did this by constant reflection on the themes, interpretations, and conclusions I was making and through the earlier mentioned peer debriefing.

The third aspect of my insider status is the fact that I was born and raised in Sarajevo. This influenced my interest in this study but also my understanding of the situation and events that transpired. I came into the research with a certain amount of emotion: disappointment over the overall inability of the country to achieve sustainable peace and economic growth 25 years after the conflict and the worry for the future of the children of Bosnia, some of whom are members of my family. Having lived in Sarajevo throughout the war, I also had a strong opinion on the key drivers of the conflict and the causes of the current stalemate in the state-building process. It was important for me to distance myself from all those emotions, opinions and enter into the research with an open mind.

Because of the potential for bias on all these grounds, I guarded against bringing my preconceived notions or personal experiences into the analysis. I did this by emphasizing thicker description and using quotes, often placing longer excerpts in the text to let the voices of the policymakers speak to the conclusions. As mentioned earlier, I used peer review to sound off my ideas and understandings.

Mitigating against potential bias caused by the insider status was also my parallel 'outsider' status. Namely, I left the country 25 years ago; I did not directly work on or participate in the Bosnian education reform, nor have I ever worked in the Bosnian context. Having spent most of my career working for the UN in New York, I was not entirely familiar with all IOs I was researching, OSCE, COE and EU in particular, and

had little prior knowledge or opinion on their effectiveness. I could say that I came into this research without much prior knowledge on the subject and that allowed me to keep an open mind and truly learn.

While the three aspects of my researcher identity - being an IO staff, an education professional working in conflict-affected setting, and a Bosnian native - meant that I had to actively guard against potential bias, they were also important attributes for the successful execution of this research. My intimate knowledge of the culture, people and history of Bosnia aided me in the understanding and analysis of critical issues that emerged from the research, for example, those related to the behaviour of national stakeholders towards each other and the IO staff. Similarly, as an IO policymaker myself, I had a keen awareness of the complexity and intricacies of the decision-making process my informants were recounting. The personal and professional knowledge, experiences, and beliefs, which I have been continuously reflexive of, influenced and enriched this research in a positive way.

4.9 Ethical considerations

The issue of ethics in research commonly involves consideration of four distinct areas: whether there was harm to participants; whether there was a lack of informed consent; whether there was invasion of privacy and whether any deception was involved (Diener & Crandall, 1978, quoted in Bryman, 2016). Noting that the research was approved by the University of Sussex Research Ethics Committee in September 2014¹¹ as a low-risk project – which demonstrated that I have adhered to the accepted ethical standards of a genuine research study - I next address how these four ethical considerations were managed in the course of this study.

Firstly, the issue of 'no harm' involves the need to protect the identities of individual informants and maintain confidentiality to data collected. In this study, protecting my informants' confidentiality and anonymity was an important way to encourage their participation in this research. To this end, all informants' names have been anonymised (they are referred to as 'informant 1,2,3...') and their titles altered to indicate generic positions within the organization (Senior, Middle). Nonetheless, the limits of confidentiality must be acknowledged - there is a chance that their identities could be inferred based on the organisations' presence in Bosnia at the time and their role in the reform process. However, this will be only an issue with the internal audience of IO staff. The broader public would not be able to discern the informants' identity. To ensure 'no harm' to the participants, I made informants aware of the possibility of their identities being

¹¹ Ethical Review Application number ER/MP401/1

recognized. Informants also had the opportunity to withdraw from the study, but none did.

I ensured the protection of data confidentiality by using tips suggested by Holmes (2004, quoted in Bryman, 2016, p. 128). Namely, all interview transcripts have codes rather than interviewees' names on them; the list of identifier codes and names is stored separately in a locked cabinet in my home; names and contacts of the participants have not been stored on the hard drive but are kept in soft copy in a locked cabinet. The transcripts of interviews are also kept in a locked cabinet.

Secondly, as described in the ethics proposal, during the data collection, I have ensured that all informants read and signed an interview consent form (see Annex 4) before proceeding with the interview. Consent forms are stored in hard copy in the locked cabinet.

Thirdly, the invasion of privacy is the ethical concern linked to the issue of confidentiality. In this case, I made sure that no personal information shared with me by the informants was included in the write up of the thesis.

Finally, the issue of deception relates, among other things, to non-disclosure to the participants of the nature or purpose of the research or as Bryman (2016) puts it "when researchers represent their work as something other than it is" (p. 133). In this research, all informants have received an abstract of the study clearly describing the purpose of the research and were made fully aware of its relevant details (See Annex 3).

Finally, ethical considerations in using text documents and secondary data relate to the proper attribution and citation of used materials and confidentiality of policy documents used. All documents examined for this study are available in the public domain. Therefore, there are no issues with confidentiality in that regard.

4.10 Chapter Conclusion

This Chapter has situated this research within the interpretivist research paradigm with constructivist ontology. Within the qualitative methodology, instrumental case study research design is used and with interviews and documentary review serving as key research methods. The Chapter highlighted how my specific researcher's attributes both aided me in the research process and also stimulated, from the onset of this research, the process of continuous reflexion. Claiming no 'epistemological innocence', the Chapter describes the ways in which my research was influenced by my prior knowledge, experiences, values and beliefs and the ways I used my peer reviewers to guard against the potential bias. The ethical concerns were mitigated by following University's ethical

standards, as well as ensuring anonymity of my informants and confidentiality of the data collected. The next Chapter provides the key findings accomplished against this methodological background and researcher's positionality.

Chapter 5: Key actors in the Education Reform

5.1 Introduction

This Chapter presents the findings from the review of relevant documents and semi-structured interviews as they relate to the Sub-RQ1 that asked: what were the key features of IO involvement in Bosnia's first post-conflict education reform?

The research first aimed to understand who the IOs were individually and as a group and in which ways they engaged in the reform process. The study looked at the type of their engagement in the reform; their choices of short-term vs. long-term technical assistance; their staff's capacities and experience; and their selection of leadership. These key features of IO involvement are important indicators of their commitment to the reform process, their willingness to address peacebuilding concerns, such as root causes of the conflict, social cohesion and reconciliation, and their capacity to conduct policymaking in the complex post-conflict environment. Furthermore, the study looked at the assumptions underpinning IO approaches to education reform and policy development, as these reflect IO understanding of the role of education in peacebuilding and shed light on their subsequent policy choices. Finally, it was essential to understand how IOs related to each other and whether any internal tensions or competing interests may have influenced their ability to act as a cohesive counterpart to national actors in the policymaking process. In investigating all these features, I attempted to understand the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities, and limitations of the international presence in the policymaking space of post-conflict Bosnia.

The Chapter is organised by corresponding issues, framed as questions for the purpose of the inquiry, that helped respond to the sub-RQ1 (see Chapter 4). Section 5.2 addresses: how did key international players engage with the reform process? Section 5.3 addresses: what have been the key assumptions and expectations of different international actors in the development of the reform? Section 5.4 addresses: what have been the tensions and contradictions between IOs in relation to the reform process? Section 5.5 summarises the findings related to sub-RQ1.

5.2 IO engagement in the reform process

As described in Chapter 3, while a significant number of IOs were in one way or another engaged in the education sector in Bosnia since late 1995, eight IOs and international

bodies played major roles in the first post-conflict education reform that started in 2001.¹² Those included: OSCE, OHR, COE, EC, UNHCR, UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank (EU, 2005, OSCE, 2011, Perry, 2003). The specific features of their engagement, as they were gleaned from the documentary review and interviews, are presented next.

5.2.1 Type of engagement

The analysis of IO roles in Bosnia's reform process identified two distinct though often overlapping types of engagement. On one side were those organisations, such as OHR, OSCE and COE, whose work included negotiations with the national education leadership on the principles and strategies of the reform process; policy advocacy for specific reform choices and legislation; facilitation of dialogue; and creation of coordination mechanisms. Several policymakers from this camp describe what the job entailed:

We worked on the Conference of Education Ministers, and my director at the time was interested in BH, and we helped negotiate setting up of this body to push ahead reforms at the countrywide level. So, I remember going to all the cantons and talking to all the Ministers to help set that up. My boss was going to Federal and State level Ministers. (Interviewee 8)

I worked with 12 ministers. We organised ministerial meetings every 3-4 months, but it was difficult and very politicised. (Interviewee 7)

We organized an international conference on education reform with all Ministers of Education to work out a plan on how to get ahead some kind of strategy for education reform on the level of the whole country, which was in the end signed by all the 13 Ministers of Education. This was, in fact, just a start and our main purpose was that we keep discussions ongoing. (Interviewee 1)

On the other side were those, including EC, UNICEF and UNESCO, who provided to national stakeholders more specific technical assistance in the implementation of policies and in building national capacities. Their work included teacher professional development, strengthening planning and budgeting mechanisms and curriculum reviews. The following quote from an informant from the 'technical camp' describes the work they did and their understanding of its nature:

Our mandate was to train different constituencies in a common process and the process focused on two goals: 1) training leaders for curriculum development policy and 2) training technicians who will be part of different committees in developing the framework. We had a professional, not political agenda. (Interviewee 3)

The work of the first group was inevitably more political as they tackled issues such as separate curricula, school segregation or returnee children's access to education, which

¹² Office of the High Representative (OHR) while not strictly an international organisation, played a key role in the education reform process. The High Representative had the ultimate constitutional authority in BH, superior to the elected government.

were closely connected to the conflict drivers and the values and interests of political parties. While some IOs may have seen the engagement on specific technical issues as purely 'professional' and apolitical in nature, this assumption was flawed. As we will see later on in this Chapter, the technical aspects of the reform were equally laden with politics.

5.2.2 Length and type of technical assistance

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the type of technical assistance provided by IOs and the continuity of their presence in the reform process are essential for understanding their role and influence in the policy development process. The choice of short- or long-term TA is often a matter of organisational priorities, available financial and human resources, as well as IO understanding of the TA purpose.

Documentary review and interviews show that some IOs (such as UNICEF, OSCE, OHR, and COE) maintained education programmes in Bosnia consistently from the end of the conflict until today providing long-term technical assistance. Others (such as EC, World Bank and UNESCO) deployed short-term technical expertise to deal with specific aspects of the reform. Several informants for the study were employed by EC and UNESCO on the contracts ranging from one to two years. Other IOs, namely COE, UNICEF and OSCE, kept the same staff for the period longer than four years.

How the varied approaches to technical support may have influenced the policymaking process was examined. Through the interviews, informants highlighted the length of tenure as a factor influencing IO effective engagement in policymaking and their ability to produce long-term solutions. One informant noted:

I am a civil servant, what they call a 'lifer'. But some of the staff in [other IOs] had short-term contracts, and they somehow had to make their mark within the period they were there. So, I think there is more pressure on them to do something quickly or push something ahead. I think continuity is an important aspect. I was there with my kids, and I felt part of the community, and it was a different perspective. I did not need to hop from mission to mission for my livelihood and also when I got back to [IO's HQ], I wanted to make sure that Bosnia was part of our policy group and our networks, and I continued to work on Bosnia case. (Interviewee 8)

Suggesting that the short-term tenure may affect the relationship with national stakeholders the same informant noted:

If people don't have an agenda to make something happen quickly within a year or two, it changes the dynamics. People from the authority also know me, and they see I care, and they see I am not just there for a year and trying to get some law through. (Interviewee 8)

Another informant highlighted that her organisation ensured continuity of engagement by giving national, rather than international, staff a representational role in the reform discussions. That informant stated:

Because I have been with the organisation since the beginning [of the post-conflict education response], I have institutional memory as well as the established connections with national and international partners. I think that matters a lot in our line of work. (Interviewee 2)

Reflecting on the continuity of their experience, two informants offered additional perspectives on the short-term technical assistance:

One of my great regrets, actually, is that following that appointment and then working with [IO] to run a training program for curriculum, I do not know if anything we did made a difference. I read things from time to time, but I have no idea what happened to the people and the work we have done. One of my great regrets is that I never really got to go back there to help with any more processes. (Interviewee 1)

I think that the work around the strategy was productive and we gave some good solutions. But yes, you do question yourself from time to time, and whether you had understood all you needed to understand about the problems people were facing. I think you try to do the best you can, with the information you have and rely on your previous experience and good judgement. You can never go in-depth as much as you would want. (Interviewee 4)

These statements describe the experience of many technical experts, who are sent to countries on short-term assignments. The lack of follow-up is common and to some degree expected – the person moves to another context and has to learn the new geographies fast. However, this may create a pattern where short-term consultants never go ‘in-depth’, never get to know the place they work, and only end up reproducing the solutions that worked in other contexts.

As discussed in Chapter 2, there is an on-going debate amongst practitioners regarding the appropriate duration of TA, with one argument favouring short-term TA to avoid creating dependency, and the other warning that complex issues of policy reform, change management, and capacity-building cannot be tackled through intermittent TA. Reflections from the informants point out the advantage of the long-term presence of IO staff in that it allows for the development of trust between them and their national counterparts, facilitates more in-depth engagement and a more meaningful follow-up. This research thus suggests that a longer-term, continued presence of IOs and their staff in complex post-conflict settings is desirable and possibly more effective.

5.2.3 Staff capacity

Another vital aspect of IO engagement in post-conflict policy development is the issue of professional background and capacity of staff. As mentioned earlier, developing policy in the context of peacebuilding requires that policymakers be keenly aware of the political economy of the context, pay attention to the underlying causes of conflict, understand how a proposed policy may influence the context, and actively mitigate against negative impacts of specific policies.

Interviews revealed that staff deployed to work on Bosnia's education reform may not have had sufficient knowledge and experience to deal with the complexity of the post-conflict policymaking. Out of eight policymakers interviewed for the study, only one had some background in the slightly similar setting (that of an Eastern European country in post-communist transition), while others brought experiences from either industrialised or developing country contexts. One informant noted:

It was my first international assignment to work for the [IO] in Bosnia. I was an experienced educator and former education administrator. I was in the Government Ministry in [*western country*], when the opportunity arose to do work with the [IO] office. (Interviewee 1)

Another informant stated:

I did not have any previous experience in post-conflict. I spent 28 years in the [*western country*] Foreign Service. In 1995, I was recruited by [IO] to work in the one of Foreign Service departments [name omitted], and that is where I got familiar with Bosnians and the war in Bosnia. (Interviewee 7)

One informant had previously worked on migration and conflict-related issues with the EC, NATO, and International Rescue Committee but in their headquarters locations.

Furthermore, none of those interviewed had ever received training on conflict-sensitive programming or conflict analysis prior to their deployment or throughout their tenure. Informants almost uniformly stated that throughout their assignments in Bosnia, they used the "learn as you go" approach.

While the professionalism and technical capacity of IO staff involved in Bosnia's reform process cannot be objectively judged through this study, it can be argued that the lack of experience in post-conflict settings had implications for their policymaking, the advice they gave and choices they made.

Furthermore, as noted in Chapter 2, the security and humanitarian sectors that dominate the peacebuilding process often lack professional expertise in the education sector, while

the development sector often lacks professionals with sufficient understanding of the conflict-affected settings (Novelli et al., 2014). Data collected on the professional background of the informants confirms that pattern. Staff from development/humanitarian sectors had good education sector expertise but lacked specific post-conflict experience. At the same time, the two policymakers from the security sector, who lead the reform process, lacked any professional background in either education or post-conflict (see Table 3).

Table 3: Informants' professional background and experience

	Security		Hum & Dev	Development				
<i>Informants by IO sector</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Professional background in education	No	Some	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Some	No
Experience in post-conflict settings	No	No	No	No	Some	No	No	No

Stressing the need for politically and context-savvy international policy advisers, an informant from the security sector, however, did not seem concerned with the lack of education-related professional background, stating:

I would say that while some post-war societies may also require development, they don't all do so. In the case of Bosnia, since it is a political problem, you don't need an army of pedagogy experts or teachers coming in trying to change things. You do, on occasion, need to bring in experts on curriculum development, plural lingual teaching standards, and civic education standards, etc., to do some targeted work. But mostly, you need political solutions and people with political skills. (Interviewee 6)

These observations may be correct to some degree, but they ignore the importance of policymakers' understanding of the critical role education plays in achieving the peacebuilding goals. Leaders of the reform who are not, at the very minimum, aware of how equitable education policies or a curriculum that integrates citizenship and civic education can contribute to reconciliation and social cohesion, may not be best-placed to engage with national stakeholders in building the education system for sustainable peace.

5.2.4 Selection of leadership

As described in Chapter 3, once the PIC placed the imperative for education reform on the international community, the choice of the reform leader had to be made. Some

informants observed that the most likely organisations to be selected for the role, due to their global mandates for education and children respectively, were the two development actors - UNESCO and UNICEF (see Table 4 for classification of IOs).

The two could have brought *Table 4: IOs by Sector*

considerable technical expertise to the table (if not from the local office, then from the regional and global hubs). However, in the peacebuilding architecture, they seem to have been positioned as participants, rather than the leads in policymaking. An informant noted:

Security	Humanitarian	Development
OHR	UNICEF	
OSCE	World Bank	
		EC
		COE
		UNESCO

I remember UNICEF being chair of one of the working groups when we were developing the Framework Law, and they lead discussions on early learning, quality learning, and things of that nature, I believe. UNESCO was supporting the curriculum reform in the early years, early 2000. But the key reform drivers, as I recall, were EC with the TAER project and OSCE. (Interviewee 1)

Informants familiar with both UNICEF and UNESCO stated that the decision to play a technical role was made based on the human and resource capacity at the time, but also, in UNICEF's case, on the acknowledged lack of political experience in the leadership of a major sector reform (Interviewees 2 and 3). Informants also acknowledged that it was evident that the OHR would select a player with 'more muscle in the peace process' (Interviewee 2).

As for other potential development sector candidates, one informant clarified:

European Commission, one of the largest investors in the education sector at the time, never strived for a leading role in this, because the EU's presence in a country is an intermittent process. The technical assistance projects are implemented, and their results determine if the next project will be implemented or not. (Interviewee 4)

The World Bank and the COE were likewise not an option, as the former's work on education was project-based, and the COE had no aspirations for more than providing technical support (Interviewee 8). An informant noted:

If I remember correctly, the World Bank may have been involved, only to the extent that they had been asked to provide funding to rebuild some schools. The World Bank doesn't have an educational mandate in this sense, they focus on helping the economy, and it is not an economic issue here. (Interviewee 6)

In the summer of 2002, the High Representative mandated the OSCE to lead the education reform process. This choice may have been unusual, but not completely unexpected. The organisation had a robust field presence through 27 offices scattered

all over Bosnia and a good record of accomplishment in coordinating national stakeholders through their work on the elections. Incidentally, in 2001 the OSCE handed over the election monitoring mandate to local governments which freed up their resources to focus on other issues. One informant noted:

As I recall, OSCE was not active in the education sector, but because they have all these election monitors around the country, they became education monitors. They had a manpower. When I was there, they had 80 people at OSCE for education. (Interviewee 8)

Three other factors influenced the choice: perceived political neutrality, the OHR reputation and individual interests. The first was highlighted in the 2001 OSCE internal memo:

The necessary continuation of the Shared Modernisation Strategy (SMS) requires the adoption of the IC [international community] activities by an international organisation perceived to be politically neutral. This excludes, ex hypothesis, the establishment of an Education Department in the OHR, as its agenda entails a political stance. (OSCE, 2001)

The second factor was related to the OHR's early and unsuccessful engagement in the education sector. Namely, in 1998 the OHR with UNESCO support conducted a review of textbooks in Sarajevo canton to identify any controversial content as a way of preparing for the return of non-Bosniak students to cantonal schools. The review, which was done behind closed doors, uncovered some problematic content and recommended its removal from the textbooks. These proposals were leaked to the media, causing an uproar in the public who found the non-transparent review process problematic. Recommendations were eventually dismissed (Fisher, 2006, Perry, 2003) and the reputation of the OHR office in the education sector was tarnished. The OSCE memo mentioned earlier notes that:

The reputation of the OHR in the BH Education sector for imposition and a non-participatory approach has caused a lack of confidence among stakeholders in the field and would stand in the way of any attempt by the OHR to co-ordinate a general education reform. (OSCE, 2001)

The third reason for the selection seems to have been driven by personal choices, namely, both the incoming HR, late Lord Paddy Ashdown, and the OSCE Ambassador, Robert Beecroft, a former teacher, had interest in young people and the education field (see Section 5.2.5 for further discussion).

How other IOs perceived this leadership choice is important to understand as it laid ground for the future interactions, including tensions and conflicts, between the IOs. Two informants offered the following views:

It was a bit surprising, although, on the other hand, I think in the back there were issues like kind of personal accommodation of some people within the OSCE and also dissatisfaction with the education handling by the High Representative. (Interviewee 4)

It's not the first time that we deal with this odd situation where organisations without technical expertise lead on these issues. It's not unique. It is somehow strange but also perhaps justified by the fact that BH was in specific situation after the war. OSCE also has a strong presence in the former Soviet Union. Perhaps it was because UNESCO was leaving, or UNICEF had other priorities. But I think the idea was that since OSCE did not have the expertise they should have coordinated, which in fact happened. (Interviewee 5)

One informant was more sceptical stating that the choice of the OSCE was somewhat surprising given the organisation's lack of experience in the education sector. Referring to the OSCE as the "CIA of the education sector", the same informant noted the choice of the OSCE was perceived as the attempt by the OHR to lead by proxy and have its eyes and ears on the ground, controlling the peacebuilding process (Interviewee 2).

Another informant shared a more positive perspective:

The OHR and OSCE (with Ambassador Beecroft) decided that the OSCE would take this role. From our [IO] point of view, their role was interesting because they could give us the feedback from the field, let us know what was happening at schools because we could not physically be everywhere. So, I thought that was interesting as they could give us this perspective. (Interviewee 8)

These quotes reveal varying views on the selection of the reform leader. Some IO policymakers felt discomfort with the choice of the OSCE. This is likely because its close alignment with the OHR had created a dominant power centre with which other IOs were now expected to align. As we will see later, these tensions created at the onset of the reform will continue to dominate the IO relationship through the reform process. On the other side, however, were policymakers who recognised the OSCE, a key pillar in the peacebuilding architecture, as the logical choice. This situation, in which the appointment of the security sector IO to lead the education reform is seen as natural, is not surprising, given the entrenched dominance of security sector in the current peacebuilding practice. At the same time, assigning responsibility for education to the OSCE in the context of Bosnia may have created the opportunity for IOs to tackle more sensitive, political issues of the reform in the way the traditional development or humanitarian sectors could not. If and how this potential was utilised will be examined later.

5.2.5 Individual actors in policymaking

One issue highlighted in the previous section warrants closer examination as it seems to have had a critical effect on the reform process. It is the influence of individual actors in policymaking. Informants for the study confirmed that much of the momentum around

the reform had to do with the personal engagement and interest in education of two charismatic leaders, High Representative, Paddy Ashdown and head of the OSCE, Ambassador Robert Beecroft. Informants suggested that the political backing the OSCE received from the OHR gave an important impetus for the education reform:

There was an agreement between Ambassador Beecroft and the High Representative; I think it was quite a formal agreement that the OSCE would take over coordination, because up until that time it had been poorly coordinated, I guess, I would have to say. (Interviewee 1)

So many things had to do with personality. There was a strong international effort at the time, so they were able to push it through. For the first couple of years, there was a lot more high-level political support. As soon as that stopped, as soon as Ambassador Beecroft left, as soon as Paddy Ashdown left, and was replaced by Christian Schwartz Schilling, who said that he was never going to interfere, ever, in the peace implementation, things fell apart. (Interviewee 6)

This is just my personal view, but just the fact that the head of the OSCE was a former teacher, and Paddy Ashdown and he got along, meant that they were able to merge forces in a way that wouldn't have happened if they hadn't been there (Interviewee 7).

Informants for the study agreed that it was the HR's passion for education that made him an advocate for the reform and its fierce implementer, as it will be shown later. Commenting on Ambassador Beecroft, observers noted that "his access to key contemporary players such as US Ambassador Clifford Bond and Principal Deputy High Representative Donald Hays has facilitated the diplomatic process and created an atmosphere in which both political and practical reforms are more achievable" (Perry 2003, p.91).

The HR Ashdown determination to use the powers of his office to move the reform forward secured many of the initial wins. This political support, however, seems to have dwindled after 2006 when both the HR Ashdown and Ambassador Beecroft left. The new HR, Swartz-Schilling, was not as keen on exercising the Bonn Powers nor, for that matter, on championing education. This affected the pace of the reform, which by the account of some observers, never regained the initial momentum. As one informant described, decrease in the level of OHR's engagement post-2006 was noticeable:

You can always say the mandate is there, but when all of a sudden you stop sending anyone higher than the secretary to the coordination meetings; when you pull the plug on the budget; when you stop supporting things in the media; it disappears. That is the reality of this kind of work. Plus, people started to realize that education was too political, and that very few in the international community wanted to recognize that the core issue was the problem of having a country with three constituent peoples who felt no common citizenship. As long as the high-level agents of change in the international community weren't interested in tackling that, it became an exercise in tweaking around the edges. (Interviewee 6)

The power of personality and individual agency is an important factor in policymaking. In discussing innovation in education, Havelock and Huberman (1977) ascribe success of new interventions to the power of a charismatic leader, which allows some people to exert influence through their personality in mobilising change in education. The case of Bosnia, however, seems to confirm another one of their contentions, that the problems arise when the person leaves and there is no institutional continuation of their policies.

5.2.6 Section Summary

This section reviewed how IOs engaged in the policymaking process. What emerges from the research is that a small number of IOs with mandates in security, humanitarian and development sectors led the education reform process in Bosnia. They played different roles in the process, based on their comparative technical advantage and the relative political power they exerted in the peacebuilding architecture. Several IOs were engaged in the political aspects of the reform, while others focused on specific technical assistance, perceiving their work (incorrectly) as non-political. IO approaches varied in terms of the length and type of technical assistance, with some providing short-term project-based support and others maintaining longer-term presence.

The security sector IO, the OSCE, was chosen to lead the reform, based on its capacity, its position in the peacebuilding architecture and personal interest in education of its leadership at the time. Development sector actors had neither the capacity nor the interest to manage the reform process and accepted the OSCE leadership with varying degree of enthusiasm. The personal interests of two influential leaders, the High Representative and the Head of OSCE, gave the initial impetus to the reform and contributed to some of its early successes, testifying to the power of individual actors in the policymaking process. At the same time, as soon as the two leaders left, the political support for the reform by key international actors declined.

Research also showed that most IO staff, regardless of the sector they represented, had no experience in post-conflict settings. Furthermore, key policymakers from the security sector knew little about education. Some justified that situation by arguing that the knowledge of the education field had little value for an education policymaker who in the context of Bosnia had to contend with political rather than technical issues. Nonetheless, the absence of any familiarity with the conflict sensitivity approaches or conflict analysis on the part of IO staff engaged in the reform, coupled with the short-term nature of technical assistance some IOs provided, brings into question the preparedness of the international actors to effectively manage the policymaking process.

5.3 Key assumptions and expectations in IO policymaking

In line with the CPA approach, this study used documentary analysis and interviews to explore assumptions and expectations of policymakers as they entered the complex process of education system reform. It examined discourses that informed IO vision for the reform and their views on the role of education in peacebuilding. Those insights are presented next.

5.3.1 Purpose and rationale for the reform

In 2001, OSCE wrote an Inter-Office Memo on Education which contained an analysis of the education situation in Bosnia and suggested four rationales for the reform:

- *economic revitalisation*, which requires not only a constantly renewable educated workforce but also educated entrepreneurs with open minds;
- *removing an impediment to the return of displaced families*, who need the reassurance that their children's education can be conducted in an environment which is open and does not discriminate against them;
- *the respect for the rule of law*, since in a democratic society the maintenance of legislative bodies presumes the existence of an electorate which is sufficiently well educated to appreciate the issues and hold their elected politicians to account;
- *state institution-building at every level*, given that the extent to which other state institutions can be reformed on a self-sustainable basis will ultimately depend upon the education of those institutions' personnel (OSCE, 2001, p.2).

In the Education Reform Strategy Paper issued by the OSCE in November 2002, these four underlining reasons were translated into five specific reform pledges (see Box 1, Chapter 3). The text analysis of the Introduction to the Strategy Paper (see Box 2) sheds light on the discourses that had framed reform rationale and its key priorities.

The Introduction conveys the sense of urgency to modernise Bosnia's education system in the image of other Western European systems. The text highlights that BH has "fallen behind the rest of Europe", that its "future is bleak", and that its "youth will desert the country" (OSCE, 2002b, p.7- shown as highlighted text in Box 2). Several references to enhancing quality of education, 21st century skills and technology (ibid.), point out to the influence of the global education frameworks such as EFA and MDGs at the time. The references to modernization, education for Europe and the world, modern university graduate, and modernization of the administrative and financial system (ibid.) imply the intention of reformers to bring the country out of its post-war and post-Communist era of underdevelopment into the family of liberal economies.

Given the influence of European actors in the reform process and the fact that the prospect for eventually joining the EU loomed large in the mind of the Bosnian public, it is not surprising that the text makes references to “EU standards” and regional agreements, such as “the Bologna Process” and “European Area of Higher Education” (ibid., shown as highlighted text in Box 2).

A Message to the People of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Education Reform

Our educational system is crucial to the development of our country's intellectual capital. Our young people must be confident that they can receive the quality education that they require to open the door to the future – here at home.

We know that the education system in BH is in **urgent need of modernisation**. It has **fallen behind the rest of Europe**. We need to make a combined and sustained effort to enhance the quality of education across the board.

Bosnia and Herzegovina's **last and best chance for a viable future** hinge on its young people. If they decide to desert it in search of better educational opportunities elsewhere, or if they conclude that they cannot compete in the region or the wider world, **the country's future will be bleak**.

We must start by **taking politics out of the classroom**, where it has no place. Instead, we should concentrate on doing what is necessary to develop and enhance the quality of education, and to ensure that this enhanced education is available to all, fairly and without discrimination.

There is no place for an education system in our country that divides and segregates children on an ethnic basis. Our education system must enable our children to go to school together, so that they can learn to respect and cherish **the precious cultural diversity that makes our country unique**.

The education system must also train our primary and secondary school children to live and work in a constantly changing world. But in BH, our curricula are overloaded, our teaching methods require updating, and too often learning is based on the mechanistic transmission of large quantities of facts. All this must change. **Education for Europe and the world in the 21st century** requires critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving skills, entrepreneurship, and a command of new technologies.

Our university students, who are so important to the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina, are likewise too often faced with a system that does not properly prepare them to be **successful in a highly competitive world**. More attention needs to be paid to the acquisition of the skills and values that the **modern university graduate** requires and expects to receive. Our goal is to establish a higher education system with credible structures and instruments of effective governance, management and accountability. The **Bologna Process** offers a tested framework for university reform. We need to embrace and implement its crucial provisions if universities in BH are to **join the “European Area of Higher Education.”**

We must modernise the financing and management system and the legal framework, which underpin the education system.

Urgent reform is needed in all these areas.

The only way to accomplish this is through the commitment and active support of dedicated, hard-working and forward-looking professors, teachers, parents, administrators and political leaders in this country. Nothing can be achieved without them, and their efforts are already beginning to make a difference. We encourage everyone involved in the process of education reform to show how, together, we can move Bosnia and Herzegovina, and its young people decisively **towards highest European standards**.

Box 2: Message to the people of BH (Introduction). Note. Extracted from Education Reform Strategy: Message to the People of Bosnia and Herzegovina by OSCE, 21 November 2002.

The message resonates with the notions of the 'liberal peace thesis', whereby following the restoration of peace and implementation of democratic elections, countries emerging from conflict should next be steered towards creation of the market-based economy, for

which they need well-prepared workforce. The emphasis on human capital is certainly not misdirected as the societies ravaged by conflict need to invest in their future economic development. What is concerning, however, is the lack of emphasis in the strategy document on education's potential to influence social transformation needed to ensure sustainable peace. Although the introductory message acknowledges the cultural diversity of Bosnia and attempts to speak to national cohesion by calling for “unity in action towards highest European standards” and for “taking politics out of the classroom” (OSCE 2002b, shown as highlighted text in Box 2), nowhere does it explicitly refer to the education's potential to build on that diversity and promote social cohesion and national unity.

In summary, documentary analysis of the Education Reform Strategy Paper points to the narrow conceptualization of the reform shaped undoubtedly by the global and regional discourses that privilege education's role in economic development over any other outcomes. What other factors may have accounted for this limited focus is explored in the next section.

5.3.2 IO views on the role of education in post-conflict

Documentary review presented in the previous Section revealed IO clear recognition of the education's role in the country's economic transformation. The interviews conducted sought to uncover if and how international policymakers understood the education's role in supporting much-needed social transformation as well.

Asked whether and how education could promote social cohesion and contribute to sustainable peace, informants expressed the following views:

Education has an important role to play, but it has a difficult battle against politics and politicians who try to manipulate it. (Interviewee 2)

The potential of education to contribute to national unity is great but difficult to achieve. (Interviewee 7)

I am a bit sceptical. In [country of previous engagement]¹³, we hoped that if we do a new curriculum, we will contribute to the shaping of the more open, democratic, and just society. But you need a minimum of political support, not just on the paper, but publicly communicated. We need to try to have a curriculum that looks into values, social cohesion, issues of justice, but we have to find the levers that would support the process in a constructive way. Unfortunately, we could not find it in Bosnia. (Interviewee 3)

My thought would be, no, not until there is a national identity developed, and a national set of values developed, and a national citizenship concept developed. I think education could reinforce and help promote that, but I do not think it can shape it. I think it has to come from the beliefs, and the values, and the behaviours

¹³ Omitted by the author for confidentiality.

of the people at large. Education and curriculum more reflect the society than shape it. (Interviewee 4)

These quotes offer an insight into policymakers' understanding of education's role in promoting sustainable peace and explain the roots of the narrow focus on the economic outcomes of the reform discussed earlier. While acknowledging its potential, several informants have little hope that education can be depoliticised to the point of meaningfully promoting peace outcomes. The more striking perspective is one that dismisses education's potential to influence formation of national identity altogether. This is especially concerning given that the policymaker worked in the context of a country emerging from an identity-driven conflict. Incidentally, the same policymaker will later on argue against the common curriculum for all Bosnian students (See Section 6.3.1).

These views are likely to have steered the IO policymakers into focusing on the technical solutions and away from efforts to use the reform as a platform to reinforce education's peacebuilding potential. The following statement illustrates this conclusion well:

We all, I mean the international community, recognised that education is crucial for moving the country from destruction to development. Were we aware that education can contribute to peace? Yes, but that was not part of the discussion - it was about reforming the way teachers teach and assess, and principals can lead, and the like. (Interviewee 1)

What emerges from these accounts is that most IO policymakers in Bosnia had limited understanding of education's potential to contribute to peacebuilding, and as a result made a pragmatic choice to use the reform to solve more practical technical issues. The statements quoted in this section once again problematise the issue of IO staff preparedness to serve in complex post-conflict settings, highlighted in Section 5.2.3.

5.3.3 Section Summary

This section reviewed the key assumptions and expectations of different international actors in the development of the reform. The research shows that the discourses shaping the education reform in Bosnia originated from the global frameworks such as EFA and MDG, and the regional European discourse on shared cultural and historical heritage, an approach dominant in education reforms across the continent (Nordin & Sundberg, 2014). The presence of global education policy is visible in the framing of reform's vision and goals that place narrow emphasis on the economic outcomes of education and the creation of human capital.

There is no mention of the social outcomes of education in the Reform Strategy Paper and no explicit recognition on the part of the IOs of education's role in creating social cohesion, promoting reconciliation and contributing to sustainable peace. This is deeply problematic for the reform occurring in the context of the international peacebuilding

effort. The research shows that policymakers participating in the reform had little appreciation of the role of education in the post-conflict social transformation, which had implication for the advice they gave and issues they advocated for. Furthermore, policymakers' assumptions and views explored in this section seem to suggest that at least for some IOs, the rationale for the education reform was not to achieve specific peacebuilding goals but to pragmatically solve technical issues related to education quality and the education system performance.

5.4 Tensions and contradictions

This section discusses issues that emerged from interviews and documentary review as key tensions and contradictions between IOs participating in the reform process. They include lack of coordination and harmonization of action; diverging views on what should be approaches to the reform process, and tensions related to the imposition of international leadership over national ownership.

5.4.1 Challenges of coordination

The early years of IO engagement in the education policy development process (1999 onward), were marked by a lack of coordination between international actors. This is not surprising given that at the time no IO held the mandate for education and there was no formal coordination arrangement between international actors. The OHR managed education issues through direct political engagement with local ministers, while agencies such as UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, and the EC began in 2000 to work on specific technical issues through the EC-TAER SMS project. Those included setting up standards and assessment agency, institutional development and policy advice, higher education, and European School networking.

According to the informants for this study, the EC-TAER SMS project did not generate buy-in from all the members of the international community, in particular the OHR (Informants 2 and 4). It would appear that after the initial failure of the Sarajevo Canton curriculum review (see Section 5.2.4) the OHR lost the confidence of both Bosnian public and education actors as well as international partners. The EC took over the curriculum portfolio from the OHR, and that caused tensions between the two organisations (Fisher, 2006, Perry, 2003). Speaking of the dynamics between IOs at the time, one informant noted:

Sometimes, to be honest, I don't think their behaviour was as admirable as it should have been. There was a lot of self-interest. There was a lot of resistance to a coordination approach. But I know that happens in many countries. That coordination of the international effort was really, I think, at the heart of why the OSCE wanted to take on education because it saw itself as an influential enough player in the international community to make a difference. (Interviewee 1)

The absence of a state Education Ministry and the local education group that would bring national and IO partners together made coordination even more complex. The onus then was on the international actors to synchronise the work of multiple stakeholders, and it was not until the specific mandate was given to the OSCE that efforts in that direction began.

With the publication of the *Education Reform Strategy Paper* in November 2002, the OSCE signalled the intention of the international community to manage the reform process. A Steering Group was established to ensure inputs and participation of all key education actors (see section 3.6.2). The OSCE also sought to ensure buy-in from the national stakeholders and public through a highly participatory and consultative process (OSCE 2002a). Nonetheless, while the coordination structures were set up, they never seem to have functioned properly. The next two sections describe tenuous relationship between IOs that prevented meaningful international collaboration and synchronisation of actions and undermined the effectiveness of the IO effort to reform the system.

5.4.2 Managing political aspects of the reform

As noted in Section 5.1.2, IO engagement in the reform process varied in focus, with some taking on bigger policy and legislative issues, while others tackling more specific, technical matters. However, rather than being complementary to each other, the various approaches created tensions between key international players, resulting in contestations and turf wars.

Through its education sector leadership mandate, the OSCE received political power to push national actors to address and reform more sensitive issues related to the root causes of the conflict – such as mono-ethnic curricula or right of returnee children to education. For this they received strong backing by the HR Ashdown whose interests, as the Chief implementer of the DPA, lied in the promotion of the refugee return and promotion of Bosnian statehood. The OSCE had the authority to coordinate stakeholders and manage the agenda and the pace of the reform. At the same time, having no funding to provide direct technical support, the OSCE depended on other IO partners, especially the EC, to manage the implementation (Perry, 2003).

The EC, on the other hand, insisted on preserving its narrow technical mandate and steering clear of politically sensitive issues. Throughout its work on EC-TAER project and the subsequent development of the SMS White Paper (see analysis in Chapter 6, Section 6.3.4), the EC was clearly focused on solving only specific technical problems such as teacher professional development, standards and assessment or teacher

certification, rejecting for example attempts by the OSCE to engage in the discussion on transforming mono-ethnic curricula into unified national curriculum.

The EC position created frustration in those who wanted to see stronger alignment between the international actors. One informant shared the following view:

The EC has been consistently loath to get involved in anything above the technical or to recognize that even the technical is political here. When I was at the OSCE, we had lots of difficulties in getting the EC on board with some of these things. In some cases, they spoke against us in terms of saying it was OK for this system to be divided. (Interviewee 6)

The “technical” camp representative defended the EC’s position by offering this explanation:

They [BH] are a sovereign state, and they should be able to make their own decisions about the reform rather than have those imposed by the international community. (Interviewee 8)

The statement highlights shortsightedness of IO policymakers who neglect to recognize the potential of the reform process to address the conflict drivers and in this way promote reconciliation, social cohesion and broader social transformation needed for sustainable peace. They also fail to realize that the solutions to the issues of segregation or discrimination in education cannot be only technical but require engaging in types of policy dialogues at all levels of the system that will reveal underlying grievances and conflict drivers.

For at least one informant the realization that a technical is often also a political issue became clear, albeit only a decade later:

I did believe at the time that the focus on quality, equity, rights would really resonate among professionals and create pressure and demand on politicians to make sustainable and systemic change. I am still surprised how difficult it is to move things in education and how even the technical things can become deeply politicized. (Interviewee 2)

In 2009, years after the start of the reform, the OSCE Head of Education presented an overview of the education sector, noting that:

The EC’s “*acquis communautaire*” (focus on public administration and economic reform critical to economic development) does not fully address BH’s particular, post-war challenges of peacebuilding and statehood. Unconditional technical assistance/public administration reform support does not address ethno-political discrimination at the heart of the current BH education system. (Kieffer, 2009)

It would appear that the appetite to address what were sensitive political issues varied between IOs. As one observer writes, “it is most likely that these tensions were due to markedly different, although not necessarily contradictory, priorities - between those which sought immediate, even imposed, solutions to urgent problems and those who

sought sustainable, locally-supported redevelopment and modernization of systems, including education systems and curriculum” (Stabback, 2008, p.454). This study concludes that the approach the EC and like-minded IOs adopted in Bosnia represented a missed opportunity for education to be recognised and used as the contributor to sustainable peace.

Some IOs justified the insistence on the narrow technical focus by the need to uphold the principle of national ownership. The debate over limits of international leadership thus became another contested issue that international actors struggled over. The next section addresses those dynamics.

5.4.3 International leadership vs national ownership

National ownership is the key principle of peacebuilding, with the restoration of national capacity to build peace at the heart of international efforts (United Nations, 2006). This research, however, highlights challenges IOs in Bosnia faced in upholding this principle.

The first challenge is related to the obstructionist role some national stakeholders played in the development and implementation of policies. In discussing national stakeholders, the study distinguishes between politically motivated policy elites and national stakeholders such as teachers, principals, students and parents who have been interested and willing to work on the furthering reconciliation and social cohesion through education in their communities. As detailed later in Section 6.2.3, the reluctance of some national actors to work together and to comply with agreed policy decisions, meant that at times IOs had to make difficult choices: to impose policy implementation directives on national actors or, respecting the principle of national ownership, continue to coax them into collaboration, delaying the reforms.

There was no agreement amongst IOs on how to address instances of obstructive behaviour and non-compliance by national actors. As described in the previous section, some IOs preferred a hands-off approach, letting local actors determine what is best for them. This position is clearly expressed in the following statement by an informant:

In the first place, in the support that [name of IO omitted] delivers, it is one of the core issues to have local ownership. It means that whatever decisions are to be taken, they have to be taken at the local level. We can advise, we can try to convince what we think is best for the country, but in the end, the country decides to take it over or not, or to amend or to change. (Interviewee 8)

On the other hand, in the early stages of the reform, the OHR and the OSCE leadership took a more hands-on approach, using their authority to reinforce reform commitments whenever those were challenged by national actors. During his tenure, Paddy Ashdown used the Bonn Powers on several occasions to force local leadership into compliance.

For example, he fined the ruling nationalist Croatian Democratic Union party 20,000 Euro for their failure to issue instructions on the administrative unification of the “two schools under one roof” in the Srednja-Bosna and Herzegovina-Neretva cantons (Perry, 2003).

Similarly, as described in Chapter 3, in 2001 the HR's Deputy in the northern district of Brčko used his powers to impose the new education law and the new curriculum after local education authorities failed to agree on them. Since then the Brčko District has served as the example of how the education system can bring the three ethnic groups together and promote reconciliation and coexistence.

Some national and international actors perceived the HR's actions as a breach of the principle of national ownership and an example of excessive authority. These two statements from informants are clear on that point:

The High Representative was governing the country like a kind of a dictator. He had a huge mandate of influencing people and institutions in the country, and I remember that in the time that I was there, we really had different opinions from the HR on how to go ahead with the reform. We would have liked to include many more local people into the process, whereas the High Representative wanted to prescribe and design what had to be done in education. (Interviewee 4)

I remember Paddy Ashdown was very forceful, but our official stance was that BH is a member state and the OHR should back off. (Interviewee 8)

The powers used by the HR to overturn decisions of democratically elected national officials were perceived as problematic, leading some observers to call his actions a ‘democratic paradox’, an attempt to promote democracy while in effect stifling the autonomy of the people (Chandler, 2001, Magill, 2010, Perry, 2003). Some observers saw danger in this approach for a different reason arguing that this situation “protects [local] political leaders from the worst consequences of their behaviour and, paradoxically, can make disruptive actions politically safer and thus more tempting” (ICG, 2009:15 quoted in Magill, 2010).

The debate on the power of the HR faded with the departure in 2006 of Paddy Ashdown. His successor, Christian Schwartz Shilling, took a drastically different approach, rarely evoking the Bonn Powers during his mandate (OHR, 2007). However, for some IO policymakers interviewed for this study, the benefit of a hindsight provided a new perspective on the discussion. The following reflections of the two policymakers are telling:

I remember speaking to OHR people, and Schwartz Shilling's cabinet was saying that of course, it was harder to get a piece of legislation through with having to convince, argue, hold political dialogues than to impose it, but it was a right thing. I am thinking of Brčko district where things were imposed, and that seems to be

working. I guess in hindsight, perhaps that approach would have worked better. (Interviewee 8)

Bosnia should have been made into a protectorate for at least ten years. We would have brought military and civilian forces to groom education and other sectors' technocrats to achieve the goals of development. Everyone insisted on peace at any costs, and that insistence may be the cause of the eventual break-up of the country. (Interviewee 7)

Although the terms 'protectorate' and 'grooming of the local technocrats' are suggestive of the colonial notions that a country needs external help to develop, the latter statement should be interpreted against the context in which local peace-spoilers were actively working to undermine not just the post-conflict peacebuilding process but the very existence of Bosnia as a state. With over twenty years of hindsight and the current reality of Bosnia's entrenched ethnic divisions and still segregated education system, the proposition made by this informant is not without merit.

What becomes clear from the interviews is that Bosnia's education reform presented to IOs a difficult challenge in balancing the principle of national ownership with the necessity to ensure effective implementation of policies and legislation that supported the peacebuilding goals.

5.4.5 Section Summary

This section reviewed the tensions and contradictions between IOs in relation to their joint engagement in the reform process. In Bosnia, the relationships between international actors seem to have been affected by three distinct problems – lack of coordination, especially at the beginning of the reform; diverging views on the approaches to the reform process, and differing interpretations of the principle of national ownership in the policymaking and policy implementation process.

While coordination was challenged by the absence of the state ministry to guide the reform process, the difficulty of harmonising IO actions lay in the perceived power imbalance between the OHR and OSCE camp, and other IOs. The two were viewed as domineering forces in setting and driving the reform agenda. At the same time, both OHR and OSCE, who relied on the EC and other partners for the implementation support, felt frustrated by the EC's reluctance to jointly engage in addressing politically sensitive aspects of the reform and to recognize that even technical issues were political in the Bosnian context. Lastly, the tensions around international leadership of the reform emerged from two seemingly competing drives: the attempts of some IOs to preserve the sanctity of national ownership and the endeavours by others to ensure effective and speedy implementation of the peace agreement.

5.5 Summary of Findings: Sub-Research Question 1

This Chapter analysed findings from the documentary review and semi-structured interviews to respond to the first sub-RQ that asks, what were the key features of IO involvement in the Bosnia's first post-conflict education reform? The research reviewed IO engagement in the reform; their choices of short- vs long-term technical assistance; their staff's capacities and experience; and their selection of leadership. It further examined key assumptions underpinning IO approaches to education reform and their understanding of education's role in peacebuilding, shedding the light on IO subsequent policy choices. The research explored the tensions and contradictions between IOs that may have influenced their ability to become effective reformers. Through investigating these features, the research aimed to understand strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and limitations of the international presence in the education policymaking space of post-conflict Bosnia. The findings in response to sub-RQ 1 are summarised next.

5.5.1 Diverse group with varied approaches and capacities

The first feature of IO involvement relates to their identity as organisations. The research found a small number of IOs with mandates in security, humanitarian and development sectors leading the education reform process in Bosnia. They were not a coherent group but a collection of organisations with different approaches to the reform based on their comparative advantage and the position they held in the overall peacebuilding architecture.

IOs provided both short-term or long-term technical assistance, some opting for limited, project-based engagement and others maintaining long-term presence in the country. These approaches may have had implications for the quality and appropriateness of their support as well as for how IOs were perceived in the national context. The research supports the view that the short-term assistance may not be appropriate in dealing with complex issues of policy reform, change management and capacity building (Asia Development Bank, 2017). Rather, it highlights advantages of the long-term presence of IO staff in that it allows for the development of trust between international and national actors and consequently may facilitate a more effective engagement.

Research showed that IO staff lacked experience in the education policymaking in post-conflict settings, including knowledge of tools and approaches such as conflict analysis or conflict-sensitive programming. Key policymakers from the security sector had little familiarity with the education field, which is arguably important for the leadership role in the education system reform. The research brings into question the preparedness of the IO staff to effectively handle the policymaking process and highlights the need for IOs to improve staff selection processes and preparedness for assignments in conflict-affected

settings. This conclusion is in line with other literature findings that problematised IO staff capacity in peacebuilding operations (Smith & Novelli, 2011).

The reform was led by the security sector organisations, the choice that was both political and pragmatic, and that confirmed claims made in the literature of their dominant role in the peacebuilding architecture. However, in the context of Bosnia, this fact may have been an advantage, as the security sector actors showed greater readiness than their development sector counterparts to bring into the education reform the considerations related to the underlying drivers of conflict as well as openness to tackle sensitive political issues.

5.5.2 More human than social capital

The second feature relates to key assumptions underpinning IO approaches to education reform, their understanding of the role of education in peacebuilding, and their subsequent framing of the reform. Two important findings emerged in this regard.

Firstly, documentary review of the reform strategy paper revealed strong emphasis on the economic outcomes of education and no effort to explicitly define education's role in creating social cohesion, promoting reconciliation and contributing to sustainable peace. The discourses shaping the reform originated from the global frameworks, such as EFA and MDG, as well as the regional EU-promoted dialogue on shared cultural and historical heritage of European peoples. The presence of global education policy is evident in the narrow definition of education and the emphasis on creating more human than social capital. IOs failed to conceptualise the education reform in peacebuilding terms. In the country that emerged from the ethnic identity-based conflict with its social fabric in tatters, this vision and framing of education was a problematic choice.

Secondly, while working on the reform, the IO policymakers seemed to have little understanding of the education's potential to contribute to the post-conflict social transformation and sustainable peace. This is not surprising given policymakers' professional backgrounds and experiences described earlier and their limited exposure to the education field and/or post-conflict settings. Therefore, the dominance of the global policy discourse coupled with limited understanding of the role of education in peacebuilding inevitably influenced the ways IO policymakers designed the reform and priorities they set.

5.5.3 Struggles to coalesce

The third feature of IO engagement relates to their internal coordination and the ability to create a unified approach to the reform. The research found that IOs struggled to coalesce and align their positions especially vis-a-vis the national stakeholders. Two

interrelated issues were contested: the engagement with the political aspects of the reform and the limits of international leadership.

The leaders of the reform attempted to promote policy discussions on issues related to the roots of the conflict, such as group identity, national unity and social cohesion. However, they were unable to generate a buy-in for this approach from their more technical solution-focused international partners. The exclusive emphasis of a number of IOs on technical aspects of the reform was often justified by the principle of national ownership. Their uncritical belief that the national actors should be principle decision makers in all aspects of the reform process, neglected to account for the peace-spoilers who were pushing the agenda of segregation and discrimination forward. The tensions between IOs arose when the reform leaders openly challenged those national education policymakers who threatened the goals of peacebuilding and even forced the reluctant ones into compliance with agreements and policies.

The findings, therefore, problematise the narrow technical focus of the reforms in the context of peacebuilding. The warnings that "the framing of educational interventions in narrowly educationist technical terms that bypass the cultural, political, religious and social contexts of implementation can undermine effectiveness in achieving sustainable peacebuilding aims and may jeopardize the capacity of education to contribute to peacebuilding" (Novelli et al., 2014, p. 5) were not heeded in Bosnia, and that may have had consequences for the outcomes of the reform process.

The findings also challenge contentions that the external peacebuilders often deny post-conflict societies the room to develop their institutions and to own the transition process, and should hence take on supportive rather than leadership roles in peacebuilding (Andersen, 2005, De Coning, 2016, Mac Ginty, 2014). The Bosnian case shows that this may be easier said than done, especially in cases where national capacity to sustain peacebuilding efforts is lacking and where local politicians are actively undermining the reform process, seeking to prolong the conflict by other means. In these situations, as noted in literature, the injection of external actors can minimize the effect of anti-peace, anti-progress spoilers (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000, Perry, 2003). This research suggests that when it comes to national ownership, IO actions must be carefully adapted to the specific context. They may require varied approaches, including at times pressure and coercion, in order to gradually improve capacity of national stakeholders to manage and sustain peace on their own.

The research concludes that the tensions and contradictions between IOs may have negatively affected the impact of the international intervention in the education reform in

Bosnia, weakening the position of IOs and their reputation amongst national stakeholders. By failing to jointly engage on difficult political issues through the education reform and to demonstrate consistent political will to push back against peace-spoilers, IOs have missed an opportunity to use the potential of education to contribute to sustainable peace.

5.6 Chapter Conclusion

Examining the key features of IO involvement in the Bosnia's education reform, this Chapter depicted a group of actors simultaneously unified in their limited understanding of education's role in peacebuilding and their narrow conceptualisation of education and separated by their approaches to the reform and their contested views on the primacy of national ownership.

The next Chapter looks at how IO mandates, capacities, and positions in the overall peacebuilding architecture influenced the policymaking process itself. By examining several IO efforts, including curriculum reform, creation of the central education coordination mechanisms and development of various education legislation, Chapter 6 explores whether and how IOs were able to affect development of the education system that would promote the goals of sustainable peace.

Chapter 6: Navigating Complexities of the Education Reform

6.1 Introduction

This Chapter presents the findings from the review of relevant documents and semi-structured interviews as they relate to the Research Sub-Question 2 that asked: whether and how did IOs seek to embed peacebuilding outcomes into the education reform?

The starting point in the analysis was to understand the context in which the policymaking occurred and key obstacles IOs faced in the policy development work. The research then examined the actions that IOs took in the reform process to ensure that the education system would make a positive contribution to sustainable peace. The analysis was both process and outcome-oriented, looking at the type of policy solutions proposed and negotiated, as well as IO success in their implementation since 2006.

The Chapter is organised by corresponding issues, framed as questions for the purpose of the inquiry, that helped respond to the sub-RQ 2 (see Chapter 4). Section 6.2 addresses: what were the key obstacles IOs faced to ensure that the education system does no harm to social cohesion and reconciliation? Section 6.3 addresses: what options have been considered by IOs to balance the imperatives of unity and diversity? Finally, Section 6.4 summarises the findings related to sub-RQ 2.

6.2 Obstacles to using education as a tool of peacebuilding

The DPA provided a blueprint for the peacebuilding process within which the education reform took place and was as such a starting point in investigating the policymaking space IOs operated in.

Interviews revealed that IO policymakers unanimously considered the DPA to be Bosnia's key peacebuilding challenge. These quotations are telling:

I think the DPA is at the core of the question – it straightjackets the country. It was important to end the war, but it did not set up a viable structure for country governance. (Interviewee 7)

There is no doubt that the peace agreement was flawed. It became a problem not only for the education sector but for the governance of the country overall. I think it has become evident by now that the system Dayton created benefited no one but political interests of self-serving nationalist parties who want to divide the country. (Interviewee 8)

As described in Chapter 3, several legacies of the DPA were particularly relevant for the education sector: it made little reference to education, it created a heavily decentralised governance structure, and in doing so, it deeply fragmented, segregated and politicised

the education system. The following sections review the implication of those legacies for the IO work on the education reform.

6.2.1 Exclusion of education from the Peace Agreement

As discussed in Chapter 2, the role that education plays in peacebuilding is often determined by its articulation in peace agreements. The marginal reference to education in one of the DPA Annexes (see Chapter 3 for details) impacted the subsequent development of the education system in Bosnia in two important ways. Firstly, the omission of education issues from the agreement meant that education was not considered by IOs a peacebuilding priority in the immediate aftermath of the conflict. The DPA effectively denied education any legitimacy and left the sector without specific support by a designated international body in the period between 1996 and 2002 (Perry, 2003). In the early years of peacebuilding, IOs showed little interest to engage in education policy development and instead focused on the provision of supplies and repair of education infrastructure. One informant noted:

The only education work the OSCE did in the period before 2000, was election education. Village leaders were targeted to help them understand the multi-party voting system as well as become aware of their and their communities' rights to vote. I remember going to many smaller townships and meeting people for whom voting was the first-time experience. (Interviewee 5)

Secondly, the absence of education from the DPA sent a signal to national policymakers that education was considered a domestic issue by the international community, implicitly giving them a mandate to organize the system following their own agenda (Perry, 2003). The new Constitution, outlined in the Annex 4 of the DPA, recognized the existence of three languages and protected the right of all children to be educated in their own language, giving legitimacy to the local politicians' demands to create three mono-ethnic curricula. As some observers noted, the DPA effectively ignored historical, cultural, and educational factors that contributed to the conflict, and made education "a hostage to latent nationalism in BH" (Nelles, 2006, quoted in Magill, 2010, p. 29).

The damaging consequences of the international community's failure to include education in the peacebuilding process in the aftermath of the conflict will become obvious only later on. Entrenched segregation, fragmentation and politicisation of education that this early course of action facilitated became weighty obstacles to IOs' subsequent education reform efforts.

6.2.2 Decentralised structure of the education system

Perhaps the most problematic legacy of the DPA is the governance structure it created. As described in Chapter 3, the agreement promoted development of a heavily decentralised education system with 13 Ministries of Education and no state Ministry of

Education. By conferring responsibility and powers for education on very small, mostly ethnically exclusive units controlled by local interests, the DPA left the state impotent (Galloway, 2006, Magill, 2010). The IOs embarking on the education reform, therefore, had an unenviable task – to mitigate effects of fragmentation and strengthen coordination and unification of the system. The documentary analysis and interviews conducted for this study aimed to understand IO policymakers' views on the benefits and disadvantages of educational decentralisation in the Bosnian setting.

In the early assessment of the education situation in Bosnia, OSCE stated with concern:

[The present system of education] is thus now organised in a way which reinforces a divided, post-conflict society, and the schools have become, actually or potentially, tools ready for use in the indoctrination of nationalist/religious xenophobia. ... This situation is not only an impediment to returns ... its impact upon the rising generations within the majority groups in the different parts of BH is potentially destabilising for BH as a whole. (OSCE, 2001, p. 3)

It further identified "the lack of adequate education structure, i.e. severely decentralised system" (OSCE 2002a, p.1) as one of the greatest obstacles to the reform. Policymakers interviewed for the study were also clearly aware of how a decentralised system may impact on the future of education. The following statements reflect both concerns related to social cohesion as well as the system efficiency:

The decentralised education system in BH educates children who are prejudiced about their neighbours, do not know how to think critically, have below-average or low achievement in learning, attend poorly equipped schools, and listen to teachers who had very little or no opportunities for continuous professional development. The decentralised system in BH is the best in doing one thing - perpetrating divisions! (Interviewee 2)

We, I, failed to realise that excessive decentralisation was going to lead to a disaster. I realised that we could only work on the margins. In the United States, decentralisation may work, but in 1995 Bosnia you could not apply it. (Interviewee 7)

Take the example of the financing of higher education. It should be at the state level. Having the financing at the cantonal level makes no sense. Or qualifications, for example. Lisbon Recognition Convention sets up centres for recognition and BH should have one that works for the whole country. If you have a couple of different centres of recognition for such a small country, it is a waste of resources! For me, it seems, and this is my personal opinion, that things should be centralised and then decentralised again, but of course, that will never happen. It has become the norm. The whole generation has grown up in this way. (Interviewee 8)

Not everyone agreed with these views at the time. This statement from the World Bank reflects a competing perspective:

Decentralisation of control over education is compatible with the desire on the part of the constituent groups to promote locally-based content - a desirable goal in education -- and is compatible with the heritage of decentralised control of education administration in the former Yugoslavia. (World Bank, 2000, p. 7)

The World Bank's position is not surprising given the organisation's well-publicised views on decentralisation as a tool to promote economic efficiency, public accountability, and empowerment (World Bank, n.d.). However, the approach neglected to account for the possibility that the 'locally-based content promotion' may be manipulated for political purposes and may contradict the efforts to unify the country torn by identity-based conflict. It is interesting that eleven years later, the World Development Report recognised, perhaps reflecting Bosnia's experience, that where decentralisation was part of the post-conflict, local democracy may be more vulnerable to political capture and can reinforce or create elites who use devolved power to pursue their own interests to the detriment of both local and national interests (World Bank, 2011).

It emerges from these quotes that most IO policymakers saw a decentralised system as a major challenge to the reform in the Bosnian context. The impact is observed from multiple perspectives - the OSCE analysis finds education decentralisation problematic for achieving broader social cohesion outcomes while other policymakers are concerned with more specific education-related outcomes, including learning achievement, school quality, and effective management of financial resources.

In Bosnia, a decentralised education system allowed ethno-nationalist political parties to fully co-opt the education system and use it as a tool for solidifying their political powers. This had implications for how national stakeholders at the entity, cantonal and school levels engaged with the reform process and with their international counterparts. Those dynamics are reviewed next.

6.2.3 Influence of local politics and role of national education stakeholders

Many observers have noticed "the unhealthy level of political domination in education policy and a fundamental and pervasive lack of trust among politicians and political parties, both of each other and each other's motives" (Stabback, 2008, p. 450). An informant for the study describes the situation in this way:

The sole reason that we had and continue to have three separate curricula is because each group and its political leaders want to be able to exclude the others and have their own mono-ethnic perspective narrative so that they can consolidate their social control. You take that away by making sure that all the curricula are acceptable to everyone, you get rid of their *raison d'être*. The elites here don't want an educated populace that is going to be able to question things, because then suddenly things will change. (Interviewee 6)

Another informant added:

The goal of nationalists was to keep themselves in power. Leaders of parties realised that eventually, after successive years of teaching children separate histories and languages, the country will fall apart. That is their end goal. (Interviewee 7)

These statements suggest the great value national actors placed on education, seeing it as a tool to maintain their grip on power and further their political interests, including secessionist aspirations. The education reform lead by IOs and underpinned by IO efforts to promote Bosnian statehood was thus a major threat to some national actors. Confirming profound political influence by nationalist parties over all levels of the system, an informant noted:

If you want to do something in the classroom and the school, it is probably possible. Some initiatives can be done at the local level, but the problem is that the politics go so deep. You have cantonal ministers, school directors – they are political – and even I've heard some teachers are told that it is best to join a political party, or the union affiliated with a particular party, if they want to advance their careers. So, the politicisation in terms of social cohesion and inclusion is detrimental to the country. (Interviewee 8)

Those IOs who insisted on de-segregation, harmonisation and standardisation of the system were perceived by some local Ministries as threat to their power. One informant recalled IO attempt to constitute the Standards and Assessment Agency (SAA) that would ensure harmonisation of the curricula:

Croats and Serbs knew what we had in mind, and they wanted to derail it. They knew that if all parties agreed on common curriculum standards, each Minister would no longer be in charge of defining his own objectives. They knew the standards would make them accountable to the population and international community, and it was clear they wanted to obstruct it. (Interviewee 7)

Describing the complex interaction with the national education stakeholders another informant described a bargaining process needed to coax all twelve Ministers¹⁴ to come to the policy table:

Whenever we wanted a meeting, we needed to get the approval of all twelve of them. The way they worked during the meetings was every minister in his own corner - Croats together, Bosniaks together and one Serb minister from RS. They made any kind of decision difficult... Think about it; there is no place in the world where you have 13 Ministries of Education for 4 million people! (Interviewee 1)

Similar challenges are revealed in this account of a conference held with all MoEs:

Different constituencies would not to talk to each other. They were making problems – they wanted to have documents in their own languages. But we were firm and refused. After a difficult first day, they realised that we had a professional agenda, not the political one, and slowly they integrated the professional approach. At the end, they accepted to work together, but it was very, very difficult. (Interviewee 3)

¹⁴ Note that although there are 13 Ministries of Education in Bosnia, the IOs in this study interacted and managed relationships with only 12 of them. The MoE in Brčko region worked exclusively with the Brčko International Supervisor (i.e. Principal Deputy High Representative)

National actors' obstruction of the reform process was also evident in their tendency to assign junior level staff to crucial policy discussions signalling the lack of importance they placed on international efforts. One informant illustrates the practice:

We had many seminars and workshops with representatives of all of cantons and from the Republika Srpska, but we didn't always get the most influential and the best-credentialed people at those workshops. They often changed. From the Republika Srpska especially, as I recall, they sometimes came from schools and sometimes came from the Ministry. (Interviewee 1)

Similarly, in her account of the EC-TAER work on SMS, Perry (2003) describes the Working Group on Integration of Minority Returnees that was tasked with one of the most sensitive issues – the right of returnee children to be integrated back into the school system. In the eyes of some nationalist politicians, however, the return of refugees represented a reversal of ethnic cleansing their parties promoted during the war. The Working Group composed of four men holding junior positions in their respective Ministries, refused to work on any legislation related to integrating returnee children to schools, and instead opted to develop suggestions on how through sport activities, schools can promote socialisation of children from different ethnic groups (Perry, 2003).

An informant's reflections on the politicised nature of the education system, summarise the issues in this way:

The education reform is not a problem that can be solved at the working level, even though the working level people were very well-intended and experts in their field. At its core, it is a political issue. Unless you can get the leaders of the three main constituent people's groups – approximately six or seven parties - to change, nothing will change. That's how it's been for 20 years. (Interviewee 6)

Similarly, analysing progress in the implementation of early agreements between Ministries, Perry (2003) noted:

It became evident that the politicization of education was not a localised phenomenon, but a deliberate strategy by nationalist politicians to use the politics of identity and fear to continue the war by other means in spite of the peace agreement. (p. 29)

It has emerged from the interviews and secondary data analysis that national actors frequently played obstructionist roles in the reform process. In the setting of highly politicised education, managing policy dialogues and ensuring participatory policy development became particularly challenging for IOs. How they would tackle these challenges will be reviewed in Section 6.3. At this point, taken alongside conclusions made in Section 5.5.3, findings from this sub-Section support the need for IO stronger leadership in the settings where education policymaking has been captured by the national actors pursuing their own, often anti-peace, interests.

6.2.4 Section Summary

This Section reviewed the key obstacles IOs faced to ensure that the education system does no harm to social cohesion and reconciliation. Several features of Bosnia's policymaking space influenced international efforts to reform the education system.

Firstly, having received little mention in the peace agreement, education was initially marginalised from the peacebuilding process, with security, elections and refugee return issues tackled as key priorities. Once the reform began six years after the end of the conflict, the system was already in the grips of the narrow political interests of local politicians for whom social cohesion and sustainable peace were not ultimate goals. Secondly, the decentralised governance structure, created by the peace agreement, gave rise to a segregated system of divided schools and curricula. In the absence of the state-level Ministry of Education, coordination and harmonisation of the education provision in the country were challenging. Finally, in the context dominated by ethno-nationalist politics, local stakeholders often played obstructionist roles, working to deliberately delay or prevent any reform effort that was attempting to create a unified and harmonised system.

As a consequence, IO policymakers interviewed for this study revealed that they felt frustrated and at times discouraged by this context. The next Section will analyse whether and how IOs worked to manage these challenges and mitigate the risk of the education system becoming the tool of divisions and further breakup of social cohesion.

6.3 Balancing the imperatives of unity and diversity

The challenge to the education system in a post-conflict society lies in balancing the need to acknowledge and respect cultural, religious, or linguistic differences between societal groups, while promoting the sense of togetherness and national unity. In Bosnia, where three parallel streams in the education system promoted segregation, IOs were forced to balance the imperatives of unity with respect for diversity.

While the DPA divided the country into two entities and decentralised the FBH even further, it preserved the sovereign State of Bosnia and Herzegovina. For IOs operating in the country the recognition of a single state was the underlying principle of their work.

This Section looks at three distinct efforts that best exemplify IO efforts to mitigate the harmful effects of the politicised and segregated education system: curriculum reform, strengthening of state-level coordination, and promotion of legislation that would prevent

further fragmentation of the system.¹⁵ Since decentralised governance was identified as the critical underlying obstacle to the reform process (See Section 6.2.2), this Section starts with a brief reflection from informants on how they managed this challenge.

6.3.1 Managing decentralised governance

Informants for this study were unified in their assessment that the decentralised governance presented a significant obstacle to the reform. Asked if the impact of decentralisation was ever discussed amongst IOs, responses from several informants suggested varied experiences. Two informants who were engaged in the political aspects of the reform noted:

Of course, it was! It was at the forefront of the reason for the OSCE, for example, insisting on a national curriculum. Whether it was discussed a great deal? Probably not, because it was often discussed in front of Ministers and so on. But I think everybody understood that the potential for disunity was great. (Interviewee 1)

Decentralisation is what the international community has been trying to fight, in limit. OSCE and many in the international community wanted to see state-wide curricula, perhaps electives so you wouldn't have to fear sending your kid to school. (Interviewee 6)

The informant working on the technical aspects of the reform noted:

It actually was an area of consideration. Although it was not a major one, I think. What was the topic of discussion was the content of history books, but also the issue of which literature is adequate for each of the three constituent people. ...The issue of trying to get a cohesive education system was on the table. Not always very obvious, but it was for sure in the minds of the internationals. (Interviewee 4)

These different experiences seem to correspond to the type of engagement IOs had in the reform – those working on the political aspects of peacebuilding were obviously ready to engage and discuss how decentralised structures are affecting sustainability of peace more than those working on purely technical aspects of the reform, which is evident from the last quote.

The above quotes also shed light on the dynamics of policymaking and the political calculations IOs had to make throughout the process. The remarks that IOs avoided discussions on decentralisation 'in front of Ministers' and that decentralisation was fought 'in limit' suggest that IO policymakers avoided challenging national counterparts on the issue of decentralisation for fear of alienating them. In addition, decentralised governance was the legitimate part of the negotiated peace agreement – hence debating its existence with the Ministers would have meant challenging the legitimate

¹⁵ It should be noted that in addition to these efforts, IOs also engaged in a number of interventions to promote unity of the system, such as peace education programmes, development of civic education subject content, etc.

constitutional arrangements. While education decentralisation was not tackled up-front, however, there is evidence that IOs worked to mitigate its adverse effects on social cohesion and to facilitate long-term peace. The next three sub-sections review those efforts.

6.3.2 Approaches to curriculum reform

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the challenge for curriculum developers in post-conflict settings is to capture how society thinks of achieving social cohesion through education. In multi-ethnic societies, diversity in the education system is usually managed in three ways: through assimilation, separation or integration (Smith, 2006). By the time IOs officially started the reform efforts in 2002, the national education actors in Bosnia had already selected their preferred option of managing diversity – that of separation, which threatened social cohesion, stability and prospects of sustainable peace. The challenge for IOs was to reverse or mitigate this situation.

The potential of the three mono-ethnic curricula to promote cleavages between ethnic groups was recognized by IOs as early as 1998 when the PIC called for their review. UNESCO, COE and OHR attempted to tackle the problem early on by commissioning several reviews and convening meetings with national stakeholders to agree on the need for changes.

At the core of the problem was the so-called National Group of Subjects that included language, literature, history, geography, arts and religion. These subjects were used to develop and reinforce children's ethnic and national identities. According to the 1999 UNESCO report, all three curricula contained, to varying degrees, bias in portraying recent historical events, defining geographical boundaries, and recognizing the existence of other ethnic groups and the state of Bosnia itself (Lenhart, Kesidou, & Stockmann, 1999). The variances in the National Group of Subjects were not only problematic from the perspective of restoring social cohesion but also from the perspective of minority and/or returnee children's right to education. Namely, if a child from one ethnic group attended a school where the other group was in the majority, the child was forced to study those National Groups of Subjects, which often depicted his/her ethnic group in negative terms or presented historical events only from the perspective of the majority group.¹⁶

The question for IOs was how to minimize or eliminate the negative effects of the National Group of Subjects on reconciliation and social cohesion. Three options were considered:

¹⁶ According to the legal provision, the school was obliged to offer different National Group of Subjects to a given minority ethnic group only if there were 20+ students of the minority group in the school.

common curriculum; common core curriculum; and curriculum standards. The description of each follows.

Common Curriculum: This approach, favoured by the OHR since early 2000 and strongly supported by the OSCE at the start of the reform, proposed a single curriculum for “all schools across the country regardless of ethnicity of students for whom, in theory at least, the classroom activities and learning outcomes would be the same” (Stabback, 2008, p.461). The approach required coordination between all MoEs and would have ensured that all students in all grades and subjects received the same learning experiences across the country. The student mobility would also be guaranteed.

As noted by an informant, “the approach of the OSCE from a policy perspective, was that there must be one curriculum for whole of Bosnia. Ambassador Beecroft, in particular, was committed to that idea, and it was basically a policy” (Interviewee 1).

Common Core Curriculum: While the common curriculum promoted the idea of same curriculum content across the country, the common core model envisaged that a number of subjects, accepted as compulsory in all (three) curricula, would have the common content (Stabback, 2008). The common core would represent about 70% of the curriculum, while the rest would be left to local ministries and schools to develop. The common core curriculum was to be developed by subject-specific, expert working groups and would include the National Group of Subjects.

Curriculum standards: Curriculum experts engaged in the EC-TAER SMS project suggested a model that would retain the three curricula but prescribe “a set of agreed, common curriculum standards in terms of quality learning objectives, processes and outcomes” (Stabback 2008, p. 463). The standards, it was argued, would ensure the same quality across the board as well as guarantee that the three curricula and textbooks do not contain offensive or divisive language.

The standards were to be set by a central body, a Curriculum Agency, whose role would also be to ensure that the curricula developed at the local level follow the standards. The proposed model envisaged a unified, country certificate given to all students who complete the curriculum that complies with the national standards. This model would have left a lot of authority with the local ministries over developing their own curricula, something that the EC promoted as a principle of their country-level engagement.

The idea of both the common curriculum and common core curriculum met fierce resistance from the national actors in Republika Srpska and in the Croat part of the Federation, who did not like the idea of relinquishing control over their mono-ethnic

curricula. International actors were similarly doubtful about the approach. The World Bank noted at the time:

The recent emphasis given by UNESCO and OHR to shared curriculum¹⁷ programs has led to an increasing entrenchment of political positions on this issue. The key constraint to progress on supporting development of improved curricula for the Federation is the lack of cooperation between the two partners of the Federation in developing shared programs, at least for some core subjects. (World Bank, 2000)

Other IOs also found the idea unrealistic in the country that was still deeply divided by the conflict. An informant noted:

The approach that one national curriculum that satisfies everybody in this volatile and deeply divided society and administration of education would never work...you'd never come up with a curriculum that actually satisfied everybody. (Interviewee 1)

In my view, however, they [OSCE] chose the wrong path by insisting on one national curriculum because education processes and education administration, despite how important education is, can't change cultural views and cultural history. The more prudent option was to develop standards. (Interviewee 4)

These quotes reveal, yet again, IO policymakers' limited understanding of the role of education in promoting social cohesion and fostering peace. The last statement comes from the same informant who expressed little hope in education having an impact on identity formation (see Section 5.3.2) and shows how such beliefs influence IO policy decisions and the technical support they provide.

As their technical solution, the EC supported the development of the curriculum standards. One policymaker involved in the process explained:

My argument was that a set of standards would really be inarguable. You couldn't have somebody stand up and say, "I disagree with a standard that says no offensive or hate material in History." No one would stand up and say that out loud. I think the development of the standards would be, if proposed, relatively simple. (Interviewee 1)

This view resonated with the position of the World Bank who as early as 2000 stated its intent to take "the first steps in a transition from establishing detailed, mandated teaching programs, to the establishment of learning standards which allow for a flexible approach to teaching and learning in the classroom" (World Bank, 2000).

Subsequently, under the pressure from the OHR and the OSCE, IOs aligned behind the second option and the common core model was integrated into the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education, adopted in 2003. However, the effort to implement this model was only partially successful – it was possible to develop a 'common core' for the non-controversial subjects, such as biology, physics, chemistry, but not for the

¹⁷ 'Shared curriculum' here refers to the efforts to create 'common curriculum'.

National Group of Subjects. In 2007, the Agency for Pre-Primary, Primary and Secondary Education was created and charged with both further development of the common core and the learning standards, an effort that is on-going until the present day.

What emerges from the interviews is that IOs, aiming to promote Bosnian statehood, attempted to tackle diversity in the curriculum through efforts to assimilate (OHR, OSCE), or (partially) integrate, through the common standards, curricula that would still retain their distinct content (EC). The OSCE and the OHR seemed to have been proponents of what Smith (2006) calls 'conservative pluralism', a concept of pluralism that avoids overt expressions of identity and emphasizes similarities among people. Other IOs took an approach predicated on accepting differences but also, it would appear, on the narrow (and erroneous) perception that education cannot be a unifying force behind national identity formation.

None of the curriculum reform solutions proposed by IOs truly gained traction in Bosnia's education system. The three curricula created in late 1990s exist to this day, albeit with some improvements in the implementation of the common core and on-going standards development. The research suggests that diverging views and the lack of unified position, coupled with national actors' strong political motivations to resist curriculum changes, made IOs unable to move curriculum issues in the direction that would successfully balance imperatives of unity and diversity.

6.3.3 Efforts to centralise: Strengthening state-level coordination

The lack of a state-level education Ministry impeded coordination of the reform process as well as eventual policy implementation and monitoring in Bosnia. IOs became aware of this fact long before the reform started and made several attempts to create a central, coordinating educational body that would harmonise the system.

In 1999, the OHR and the COE established a Conference of Ministers of Education composed of 14 Ministers (Minister of Civil Affairs of BH, two entity Ministers of Education, ten cantonal Ministers of Education and the Head of Brčko District Education Department). The purpose of this body was "to improve and enhance the immediate dialogue of education authorities at all levels and their agreements on the most important issues regarding education policies in the education sector as well as to alleviate monitoring of the implementation of the agreed policies at the local and international levels" (EU, 2008, p.11). The Conference was not designed to act as the state-level mechanism for decision-making but rather represented a forum for bringing all Ministers together for relevant policy discussions. In that sense, its role and potential were limited. One informant explained:

We knew the Conference would not replace the central Ministry role, of course, but at the time, we were hard pressed just to bring them to the same room, let alone to get them to discuss anything. The creation of the Conference was a major breakthrough! But we were making one step forward, three back, in those days. (Interviewee 8)

Indeed, while the creation of the Conference of Ministers of Education as a platform for policy discussion can be considered a success, its impact on the real policy changes or implementation remains minimal. The EU assessment of its efficiency in 2004 found the following problems:

Infrequent meetings of the Conference's full membership, the lack of defined procedures and templates for exchange of relevant information, a flexible approach to the implementation of conclusions and views of the Conference and frequent transformation of the members' attitudes toward the views and conclusions impeded their implementation and monitoring of the results in practice. (EU, 2008, p.5)

Another attempt at harmonising the system was the creation in 2000 of the Standards and Assessment Agency (SAA) by the World Bank and the EC. An informant explained:

The only chance that we had [to unify the system] was to set up Standards and Assessment Agency. In the setting of Bosnia, this was the only way possible, but we had no illusions that it would be a great success - the system was so divided. (Interviewee 7)

The key functions of the SAA were to collect and publish the data on the quality and quantity of learning in primary and secondary schools in grades 6 and 9, undertake external assessment at the end of the second and third triad of primary education, establish standards of pupils' achievement, and provide assistance in validating domestic certificates and diplomas in other countries (Educational Authorities in BH, 2003). Similar to the Conference of Ministers, the SAA effectiveness, however, was impeded by the lack of engagement of some national policy elites from the Federation and RS. Describing the situation, Perry (2003) wrote:

Key procedural challenges include the lack of SAA presence outside of Sarajevo, the future logistics related to organizing much larger testing efforts involving more students and the fact that support among the Entities' MoEs for an expanded programme of testing is not guaranteed. (p.71)

The SAA was eventually dismantled due to its ineffectiveness. In 2005, the PIC called for urgent establishment of a state-level education agency. Reflecting the low level of trust in national actors' willingness to coordinate, observers at the time noted that unless run by the OHR, such agency "would have no success in the hands of local institutions" (Magill, 2010, p. 30). Eventually, as mentioned earlier, a state-level agency for Pre-Primary, Primary and Secondary Education was created with a specific technical mandate of creating common core curricula, establishing learning standards, monitoring and evaluating learning achievements, developing adult education and lifelong learning,

and participating in the development of the qualification framework (Agency for Pre-Primary, Primary and Secondary Education, n.d.). The agency exists to the present day and alongside the Conference of Ministers represents the only space for coordination between various ministries. A bigger vision of a harmonised and unified education system remains unfulfilled.

These accounts of IO attempt to coordinate the system place the responsibility for failure on national actors and their obstructionist attitudes toward the reform. At the same time, some informants reflect on IOs portion of the blame:

When there are structures to ensure it, coordination will happen, even in the absence of political will. Think about it! In a normal country, a lot of politicians don't want to do certain things, but they do it. If they don't do it, either they won't be elected, will be voted out of office or kicked out, or they might lose their job for not doing their job. What are the incentives we put here to get politicians to do something that they don't want to do? Nothing. (Interviewee 6)

The statement suggests that IOs were unable (or unwilling) to incentivise the national stakeholders to participate in the coordination and therefore are also responsible for the failure in the uptake of the coordination mechanisms. This statement recalls earlier reflections on the IO role in enforcing compliance of national actors with adopted agreements (see Section 5.4.3). It appears that some of the early successes in setting up the coordination structures coincided with the HR Ashdown's tenure in office, but the study did not generate enough evidence to make any reasonable correlation between his presence and increased political pressure he exerted on national stakeholders and the outcomes of the IO efforts on coordination.

In conclusion, while the national stakeholders played the obstructionist role in the international efforts to coordinate education sector, this research shows that IOs inability to generate incentives for coordination may have also contributed to the failure of the reform process to harmonise and unify the system.

6.3.4 Legislation to prevent divisions

The analysis of IO efforts to ensure that the education system does not adversely affect reconciliation and social cohesion cannot be complete without an examination of selected declarations, agreements, and legislation they drafted and/or helped broker.

A selected number of documents reviewed for this study (see Section 4.5.2) testify to IO efforts to address issues of segregation and politicisation of the system and to emphasise the centrality of the Bosnian state. As shown in the underlined text in Table 5, the language in the key documents is clear and unambiguous in this regard – it calls for removal of bias in the curriculum, speaks against discrimination and fragmentation, emphasises common cultural and linguistic heritage, and reminds that politics do not

Table 5: Language in key policy documents

Issue	Agreement	Relevant language
Bias in the curriculum	<i>Agreement on the Removal of Objectionable Material from Textbooks and Implementation Agreement (1999)</i>	Objectionable material, as identified by the appointed Expert Teams and further decided upon by the process of arbitration of the Independent International Commission, <u>will be either removed or annotated</u> , as set in Annex 1 to this agreement. Material to be removed will be obliterated by blacking in the textbooks. (Para 1)
	<i>Inter-ministerial Education Declaration and Agreement aimed at harmonizing the segregated education systems (2000)</i>	While each constituent people of Bosnia and Herzegovina is intitled to preserve and develop its own cultural and linguistic heritage, <u>common and shared elements which facilitate intercultural understanding and communication should be stressed and reflected in all curricula and relevant textbooks.</u> (Para 3)
	<i>Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education (2003)</i>	During educational or other activities in school, <u>didactic or other material must not be used or exposed, nor teachers and other school personnel are allowed to give any statements that could reasonably be rendered offensive to the language, culture and religion of students that belong to any ethnic, national or religious group.</u> (Article 10)
Segregation	<i>Inter-ministerial Education Declaration and Agreement aimed at harmonizing the segregated education systems (2000)</i>	<u>Education must no longer be used to divide and fragment the communities of BH; on the contrary, it should be used to bring them together and live in tolerance with one another. Any existing forms of segregation must be removed</u> from parallel educational systems in the Federation and Republika Srpska..(Para 2)
	<i>Education Reform A Message to the People of BH (2002)</i>	There is <u>no place for an education system in our country that divides and segregates children on an ethnic basis.</u> (p.1)
Centrality of BH state	<i>Inter-ministerial Education Declaration and Agreement aimed at harmonizing the segregated education systems (2000)</i>	Curricula and textbooks for the national subjects <u>must use Bosnia and Herzegovina as the country of reference.</u>
	<i>Education Reform A Message to the People of BH (2002)</i>	Implementing <u>a state-level law on education in primary and secondary schools</u> , as prescribed in the Council of Europe post-accession commitments ... (Pledge 5)
	<i>Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education (2003)</i>	Developing awareness of <u>commitment to the State of BH, one's own cultural identity, language and tradition....</u> (Article 3)
Politicisation of schools	<i>Education Reform A Message to the People of BH (2002)</i>	We must start by <u>taking politics out of the classroom</u> , where it has no place.
	<i>Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education (2003)</i>	<u>Activities of political parties and their progenies are forbidden in the school.</u> (Article 40)

belong in school. The fact that they were all signed and adopted by all Ministries also testifies to IOs' success in convincing national stakeholders to institutionalise these important principles. The *Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education* adopted in 2003 is perhaps IO most significant achievement in harmonising the system and promoting de-politicization and de-segregation of education. As a state-level law, it directed the development and content of policies at the entity and cantonal levels. It also incorporated two major reforms demanded by international actors – the removal of offensive content in textbooks (Art. 10), and a harmonisation of curricula (Art. 7). The law imposed a single system of certificates and diplomas, thus facilitating exchange between schools within the country, which is particularly important to returnee children.

Interestingly, however, documentary analysis has revealed some inconsistencies between this key legislative provision and the document operationalising it. Namely, the White Paper on Primary and General Secondary Education in BH, developed under the guidance of the EC in October 2003, aimed “to crystallise the policy and offer operational priorities for the reform” (Educational Authorities in BH, 2003, p. 7). Building on the provisions of the Framework Law, the paper would presumably reflect the Law's emphasis, and language, on preventing bias in the curriculum, segregation of the system, and preserving the idea of the Bosnian state.

However, the documentary analysis of the White Paper shows that those notions are either missing or considerably softened in the language of the paper. For example, while the Article 3 of the Framework Law directs the education system towards “developing awareness of commitment to the State of BH, one's own cultural identity, language and tradition” (The Framework Law on Primary and Secondary education in BH, 2003, p.2), the White Paper makes no mention of the Bosnian state. Instead it notes that,

the creation of the new system of education (and new concept of the curriculum as one of its key components) should be adjusted to the European dimension of education and development, on a common European heritage of political, cultural, and moral values. (Educational Authorities in BH, 2003, p. 9)

Similarly, in laying out the normative framework for defining the goals and outcomes of education, the Paper lists the following seven principles:

1. Science-based principle
2. Principle of compulsory and non-selective primary education;
3. Principle of equal opportunities for all
4. Principle of decentralisation, democratisation and de-politicisation (professionalism)
5. Principle of education for participatory needs in a democratic society
6. Principle of education for needs of an information and global technological society
7. Principle of education as a lifelong process (ibid, p.23)

These broad principles fail to explicitly address the key problems of the education system – its segregation, politicisation, and fragmentation. Decentralisation is emphasised as the reform's core principle, and de-politicisation qualified as professionalism, which from the further reading of the text seem to denote a merit-based system in education staff professional development. The vision of the Framework Law is hollowed out at the level of its operationalization by the choice of operational priorities, by weakened language and by omissions. The two documents, one influenced by OSCE and the other by the EC also demonstrate how IOs create and influence policies through contestations, reinterpretations and reformulations.

The final point in the analysis of IO-supported agreements and legislation is related to their implementation in the years since their adoption. This research found a concerning gap between policies and their implementation (Fisher, 2005, Perry, 2003). In 2006, Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC) in its report on the reform progress, finds that "some Cantons have failed to implement legislation on primary and secondary education in particular with regards to the so-called "Two schools under one roof" and that some cantons refuse to transfer their competences in education policy to the Federation" (IDMC, 2006, p. 112). In 2015, EU analysis of the situation of education in Bosnia concluded that "we can formally speak about a common education policy at the state level, even though, in practice, it is hard to find results of the common education policy over the entire territory of the Dayton state. The result of such disunion is uneven education policies, emphasis on the national group of subjects and lack of any valid external evaluation of students' achievements after finishing primary and secondary school." (EU, 2015, p.3).

6.3.4 Section Summary

This section reviewed what options were considered by IOs in the period under the study to balance the imperatives of unity and diversity in education system. The research found that IOs working on the education reform in Bosnia tried to mitigate the adverse effects of the politicised and segregated education system through efforts that included developing curriculum reform options to unify the system; creating state-level coordination bodies; and, embedding into legislation commitment to non-discrimination, de-segregation and de-politization. The IO record of success in these efforts is uneven.

The research suggests that the lack of a unified position on curriculum reform, coupled with some national actors' strong political motivations to resist curriculum changes, made IOs unable to move curriculum issues in the direction that would successfully balance imperatives of unity and diversity. The research also demonstrated IOs' inability to generate incentives for coordination may have contributed to the inability of the reform

process to harmonise and unify the system. While scoring major legislative wins, in particular through the development and adoption of the Framework Law, their translation into policies and their implementation remained uneven and weak.

6.4 Summary of Findings: Sub-Research Question 2

This Chapter analysed findings from the documentary review and semi-structured interviews to respond to the Sub-Research Question 2 that asked: whether and how did IOs navigate the complex political and social context of the post-conflict Bosnia in order to embed peacebuilding outcomes into the education reform? The research identified the key obstacles that IOs faced in the development of the reform policies and examined the actions that IOs took in the reform development process to ensure that the education system would make a positive contribution to sustainable peace. The findings in response to sub-RQ 2 are summarised next.

6.4.1 Working against many odds

IO work on the education reform occurred in the context fraught with challenges to embed peacebuilding outcomes into the education system. Exclusion of education from the peace agreement indicated that the international actors did not see it as part of the post-conflict political, economic, and social transformation. By doing so, they missed a significant opportunity to mitigate the impact of conflict on education and address the roots of conflict through the education system (Dupuy 2008).

Marginalisation of education in Bosnia's peacebuilding architecture was detrimental not only because of education's potential to affect social transformation but also because by leaving education sector 'unattended' they allowed for the creation of the segregated, fragmented and overly-politicised education system. By placing education on the margins of the peacebuilding process, international and national actors prevented the critical policy dialogues, revisions, and reforms of the sector and opened the space for nationalist parties to co-opt education for their own political benefit. By the time IOs began the reform, three segregated education streams of the system were created, with most national actors poised to protect the status quo. This situation confirms findings from the literature that the late entry of IOs misses the opportunity to use the education system reform as a tool for strengthening social cohesion, reconciliation and facilitating sustainable peace (Smith, 2011).

Highly decentralised governance was used by political parties to solidify ethno-nationalists' ambitions to have full control over the education system, which they saw as critical for consolidating their power. This situation jeopardised prospects of reconciliation and strengthened social cohesion through education. The research, therefore, confirmed

the findings from the literature that in post-conflict setting, a decentralised system can reinforce or create elites who use devolved power to pursue their interests (World Bank, 2011). The research also confirmed that the process of peacebuilding is mediated by the domestic actors “through a complex mixture of local resistance, co-option, compliance and rejection” (Liden et al., 2009, p. 588). In Bosnia’s case this became a serious obstacle to IO efforts to reform the system, in particular when it came to achievement of peacebuilding outcomes. Local stakeholders, governed by ethno-nationalist politics, often played obstructionist roles, working to deliberately delay or prevent any reform effort that was attempting to create a unified or harmonised system.

6.4.2 Struggling to unify a fragmented system

The research showed that despite the obstacles in their policymaking space, IOs attempted to ensure that the education system would make a positive contribution to sustainable peace. IO efforts brought some harmonization of the system through the development of the common core curriculum, creation of the Conference of Ministers and adoption of key legislation, all of which promoted the idea of the unified state and the unified education system. However, the implementation of related policies has been consistently uneven or lacking, with the system still built on the three curricula streams, existence of multiple Ministries, and weak coordination between the two entities in particular. While national stakeholders’ obstructionist attitudes contributed to these outcomes, IOs internal disagreements and inconsistent political will to act resolutely against the peace-spoilers made them collectively weak to achieve sustainable peacebuilding outcomes through the reform.

6.5 Chapter Conclusion

In seeking to uncover whether and how IOs managed to embed peacebuilding outcomes into the education reform, this Chapter first portrayed Bosnia's policymaking space as riddled with obstacles and challenges that constrained IOs in their efforts. Some of those challenges were of the international actors' making, for example, exclusion of education from the peace agreement, late entry into the reform process and diverging and uncoordinated approaches to the reform. Other challenges were external, originating in the structure of the system and nature of its governance as well as in national stakeholders' obstruction of the reform process.

The research demonstrated that despite these challenges, IO efforts brought some harmonization of the system through development of the common core curriculum, creation of the Conference of Ministers and adoption of key legislation, all of which promoted the idea of the unified state and the unified education system. At the same time, there is no doubt that an earlier start to the reform, more aligned IO approaches in

the policymaking process, and consistent political will to exercise international leadership and push against peace-spoilers, would have produced better results.

The next Chapter summarises findings from both sub-research questions and attempts to synthesize them, analyse their policy relevance, and provide some suggestions for future research on these issues.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This study investigated education policymaking processes in the complex post-conflict environment of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Specifically, the study explored the role of IOs in post-conflict education system reform, their approaches to managing the policy development process and their ability to influence and promote creation of the education system that would contribute to sustainable peace.

The main research question that framed this inquiry asked what was the role of the international community, who managed the education reform process, in promoting reconciliation and sustainable peace through education?

This Chapter presents the summary and discussion of findings of the two sub-research questions (Section 7.1), synthesises the research findings (Section 7.2), makes recommendations for policy and practice (Section 7.3) and the future research (Section 7.4). The Chapter then suggests this study's contribution to knowledge (Section 7.5) and concludes with the reflection on my research journey (Section 7.6).

7.1 Summary of research findings

7.1.1 Key features of IOs engagement in the reform (sub-RQ1)

In Chapter 5, I explored the key features of IO involvement in Bosnia's post-conflict education reform by examining three specific issues: how IOs engaged in the reform process; what key assumptions and expectations they carried into the development of the reform; and what tensions and contradictions existed between them in relation to the reform process. Critical analysis of these issues helped me answer the sub-RQ1. The research findings can be summarised as follows:

- The IOs who led the reform process were not a coherent group but rather a collection of organisations with different roles based on their comparative technical advantage and the relative power they exerted in the political setting of the post-conflict Bosnia.
- The education reform was led by the security sector organisations, confirming the claims made in the literature of their dominant role in the peacebuilding practice. The implementation of the DPA being at the core of their mandates, these IOs showed greater readiness to address through the education reform issues related to underlying causes of conflict, than their development sector counterparts. Their position on curriculum is one example of this.
- The discourses shaping IO approaches to the education reform were influenced by the global and regional education and development frameworks resulting in a narrow

definition of the reform goals and prioritised economic over social outcomes of education. This is evident from the analysis of key reform strategy documents that highlight the goal of human capital development while neglecting education's role in strengthening social cohesion, promoting reconciliation, and contributing to sustainable peace.

- IO capacity in the education sector varied with some relying on long-term continuous technical presence and others opting to bring in short-term expertise to deal with specific reform issues. The study found that the longer-term presence may lead to the creating of stronger links and trust relations with the national stakeholders. At the same time, short-term missions impact the quality and relevance of technical assistance as they do not allow IO staff to gain in-depth understanding of the political, social, and cultural context for which they were proposing policy solutions.
- IOs approached reform in different ways, with some attempting to tackle challenging political aspects of the reform, while others insisting on providing strictly technical solutions to education problems. The latter position was often justified by the need to ensure national ownership, which in Bosnia's context worked to the advantage of the peace-spoilers.
- IOs held different views about the scope of international involvement in the policymaking, with one group insisting on the sanctity of national ownership (at any cost) and the other using their leadership role to force the reluctant local actors to comply with the reform process.
- The tensions and contradictions between IOs may have weakened the position of IOs and their reputation amongst national stakeholders. Failing to jointly engage on difficult political issues, such as the root causes of conflict, and demonstrate political will to push back against the peace-spoilers, may have been a missed opportunity to use the potential of education to contribute to sustainable peace.

7.1.2 Efforts to embed peacebuilding in the education reform (sub-RQ2)

In Chapter 6, I explored IOs efforts to embed peacebuilding outcomes in the education reform by examining two specific issues: the key obstacles that IOs faced in the development of the reform policies and the actions that IOs took in the reform development process to balance the imperatives of unity and diversity. Looking at these issues helped me answer the sub-RQ2. The research findings can be summarised as follows:

- By placing education on the margins of the peacebuilding process, international actors prevented the critical policy dialogue and reforms of the education sector needed in the years immediately after the war (1996-2001). This opened the space

for ethno-nationalist parties to co-opt education for their political benefit. By the time the international actors entered the education policymaking space in 2001, a segregated three-stream parallel education system had already been solidified. The research confirmed the current practice of marginalising education from the peacebuilding process, which fails to capitalise on the role education could play in ensuring sustainable peace.

- International efforts to reform the education system in a way that would ensure that education becomes a tool for reconciliation, social cohesion, and peacebuilding was obstructed by the heavily decentralised governance structure and national stakeholders' entrenched support for a segregated system. In this climate, the reform efforts became heavily politicised, with IOs caught in the middle of the struggle to assert their leadership while promoting local ownership.
- The global and regional influences on policymaking were moderated by strong national influences that challenged the vision of a harmonised education system and worked to obstruct any reform efforts aimed at promoting national unity. In Bosnia, where the quest for ethnic security by three main ethnic groups continues to be the underlying conflict driver, the policy solutions that proposed integration of system were seen by many as a direct threat to meeting that unrealized need. This was demonstrated, for example, in the positions taken by Serb and Croat stakeholders on the common curriculum. For them, any integration effort was an attempt to undermine their ethnic identities.
- With varying degree of success, IOs attempted to mitigate the effects of the decentralised and segregated system through efforts to unify the curriculum, create a state coordination body and enact legislation and policies that promote unity and guarantee access to education to all children regardless of the ethnic group.
- The obstructionist roles played by most of the national stakeholders in the reform process contributed to the failure in achieving sustainable peacebuilding outcomes of the reform. At the same time, the lack of internal coordination, disagreements related to reform approaches and the engagement with national actors, seem to have made the IOs collectively weak. In addition, the IOs' wavering political will encouraged peace-spoilers to push back on the proposed unification of the system. In 2020, eighteen years after the first education reforms started, the Bosnian education system is still marred by segregation, politicisation and fragmentation.

7.2 Synthesis of research findings

This research was structured around two sub-questions that examined the key features of IO involvement in the Bosnia's post-conflict education reform (Chapter 5) and the

actions they took to embed peacebuilding outcomes into the reform process (Chapter 6). This section provides a synthesis of research findings as they relate to the main research question: what role the international community, who managed the education reform process in Bosnia, played in promoting reconciliation and sustainable peace through education?

7.2.1 Late start to the education reform can have irreversible consequences

This research showed that IO efforts at reform might have come six years too late.

The time lag between the end of the conflict and the official start of the education reform under IO leadership gave national stakeholders ample opportunity to segregate, fragment and politicise the education system in a way that made all subsequent reform efforts extremely challenging to design and implement. This situation is reminiscent of other peacebuilding contexts, such as Sierra Leone for instance, and it brings into question the current practice of sequencing of the peacebuilding process (security, democratisation, elections, development) whereby social sector reforms are included in the longer-term reconstruction strategy but neglected in the early years of the peacebuilding process (Smith, 2011). Similarly, the claim that the early tackling of sensitive education issues (such as language of instruction, teaching of history or curriculum reform) can lead to reopening animosities and past grievances, and can increase the risk of resumed conflict (World Bank, 2011), is not supported by this research. Instead, as others have argued, the early engagement in the education reform could have produced some critical peace premiums and would have been a better choice of IO action in Bosnia (UNESCO, 2011).

The late start is closely linked to the exclusion of education from the peace agreement. With education on the backburner of peacebuilding and minimalist security agenda in the forefront, the potential of education to contribute to promotion of social cohesion and sustainable peace was weakened.

7.2.2 Technical solutions to education problems are insufficient in post-conflict

The research found that the exclusive focus on technical aspects of the education reform by some IOs diminished their collective ability to achieve education reform outcomes that would contribute to broader peacebuilding efforts. Such an approach was in contrast to the UN peacebuilding theory of change that stipulates that addressing root causes of conflict, building institutions and capacities to manage conflict, promoting social cohesion and trust between groups, and building trust in institutions, should underpin all peacebuilding efforts (Peacebuilding Fund, 2018).

As highlighted in the literature, technical solutions, and generic approaches to policymaking in post-conflict are often driven by IOs' lack of understanding of education's potential to contribute to post-conflict social transformation and peace. This, however, can result in the missed opportunity to use education as a vehicle for sustainable peacebuilding.

Researchers further point out that:

In view of the current concern with durable peace and peacebuilding, and the dangers that countries might revert to conflict, it may be advisable to develop education programmes in post-conflict environments that actively address the particular drivers of conflict and modify their programmes to a development plus drivers of conflict education approach. (Novelli & Smith, 2011, p. 31)

This research showed that IOs participating in Bosnia's education reform differed considerably in their approaches to the reform process. As lead organisations in the peacebuilding architecture, the OSCE and the OHR demonstrated readiness to deal with issues related to underlying conflict drivers, as they worked on unified curriculum or right of returnee children to education. Others, most notably the EC, favoured the focus on technical issues and regarded some of OHR/OSCE's actions as an affront to the principle of national ownership. These internal tensions and struggles to harmonise their approach led to the general weakening of IOs' collective ability to use the education reform as a catalyst for broader peacebuilding outcomes.

7.2.3 Post-conflict settings require distinct IO staff capacities

This research shows that IO staff serving in a post-conflict setting need a distinct set of skills, knowledge, expertise and experiences, in order to successfully influence the education reform in a way that contributes to sustainable peace.

The research confirmed findings from the literature that the capacity of IO technical staff working in the peacebuilding context to provide relevant guidance to the education reform process may be inadequate. This is the case not only amongst security or humanitarian sector staff but also amongst the traditional education experts. This research showed that the key international actors engaged in the reform process lacked experience in the post-conflict setting and mostly relied either on their experiences from the industrial countries or development contexts. The research also confirmed that most IO staff had little understanding of the role education plays in peacebuilding. As a result, the reform goals were framed in narrow economic terms and focused on technical solutions rather than on addressing the peacebuilding concerns, such as fostering social cohesion and reconciliation.

The research also confirmed that in the complex system reform, the longer-term deployment of specialised education experts might have the benefit of creating strong, trust-based relationships with local actors, which in turn aids the policymaking process.

7.2.4 Strong IO leadership may act as a bulwark against peace-spoilers

This research found a problematic tendency of politically motivated national policy elites to obstruct and derail the peacebuilding process. It further showed that a strong leadership and enforcement role of IOs in the policymaking process mitigated the situation, promoting the implementation of the peace agreement.

The political influence on education of ethnic-based parties was a significant obstacle to embedding reconciliation and social cohesion into the education reform process. This confirmed the contention by Bush and Saltarelli (2000) that the local context can produce abundance of anti-peace, anti-progress spoilers and the stronger role of the external actors may be critical in deterring these forces and sustaining the peacebuilding process.

The study suggests that in some cases, more assertive international presence in policy development and implementation may be very effective to ensure that the education system does not become co-opted by nationalist ideologues wishing to plunge the country back into war or reverse the outcomes of the peace process. This was evidenced in the case of Brčko where the international Supervisor overturned local decisions that ran counter to the goals of peacebuilding, eventually creating an inclusive and harmonised education system in which children from all ethnic groups study together.

Indeed, the case of Brčko highlights the potential of education to play a major role in the reconciliation and gradual reintegration of the deeply divided societies. The international community is largely credited with creating an arrangement that straddled both respect for diversity and the need to unify the citizens of Brčko, although it must be recognised that the local actors' support (teachers in particular) contributed to its uptake over the years. At the same time, the scalability of the model is questioned on the grounds that the high concentration of international resources, attention and technical assistance that existed in Brčko is impossible to reproduce in the entire BH territory. The key, however, seems to be the political will of the international community to promote the model and persist in its implementation. After the departure of Paddy Ashdown in 2006, such types of international engagement in the education reform has waned and no effort was made to replicate the model elsewhere.

7.2.5 Security sector leadership of education reform may foster peacebuilding

This research found that the leadership of the education reform by the security sector IO offered more opportunity to engage on the critical issues related to the root causes

of the conflict, social cohesion, and reconciliation and to potentially use education as a tool for peacebuilding.

While the literature is critical of the security sector dominance in peacebuilding, the choice of the OSCE as the lead of the sector reform in Bosnia was not necessarily detrimental. It was clear that the OSCE backed by the OHR tried to engage national stakeholders on issues relevant to peacebuilding. The unwillingness of the risk-averse IOs to support these efforts diminished the potential of the international community to make bigger inroads into transforming the education reform into a tool of peacebuilding. Linked to conclusion of 7.2.4, this research suggests that IO actions must be adapted to the specific country context and allow for inclusion of both noninterfering and coercive approaches in an effort to improve national actors' capacities to manage and sustain peace on their own.

7.2.6 Peacebuilding goals, IO discourse and local realities may be misaligned

This research points out the potential misalignment, in some contexts, between the goals of peacebuilding, IOs discourse around and interpretation of those goals, and the reality on the ground.

The peacebuilding theory of change, presumably embedded in IOs' work in post-conflict settings, posits that addressing root causes of conflict, supporting social cohesion and reconciliation, and helping governments gain legitimacy in the eyes of their citizens, creates a route to sustainable peace. The study, however, shows that in Bosnia IOs were not aligned in those efforts and may have envisaged pathways to sustainable peace differently. As a result, some focused on strictly technical solutions to improving the education system, prioritising economic outcomes of education through building human capital, while the work of others focused on the social outcomes as they more readily tackled the issues related to root causes of conflict, reconciliation and social cohesion. Inability by some IOs to recognise education as a tool for peacebuilding eventually diminished the potential of the reform to contribute to social transformation required for achieving sustainable peace.

7.2.7 Educational decentralisation may undermine peacebuilding

This research found that IOs experienced decentralised education as the main obstacle in promoting reconciliation and sustainable peace through education.

From the perspective of peacebuilding and reconciliation, decentralisation of the Bosnian education system has been deeply problematic. Decentralisation resulted in the segregation and fragmentation of the system and has had long-term consequences on the ability of the education system to promote and nurture social cohesion and

reconciliation among young generations of Bosnians. This research supports evidence from the literature that decentralisation in post-conflict can reinforce or create elites who use devolved power to pursue their own interests to the detriment of both local and national interests (World Bank, 2011).

This research suggests that a transitional solution, such as a centralised system of policymaking with mediation by international actors, may be a better-suited approach in some contexts. This proposal resonates with Smith's (2009) analysis of the state of Bosnia's education, which concludes that "with foresight, Dayton might have reserved more control of education to a single state education authority...It could be argued that any further strengthening of the decentralised system may, in fact, contribute to greater instability ...and threaten state cohesion" (p.12).

Indeed, the case of Bosnia suggests that the centralisation of governance may be a preferred governance modality in post-conflict societies that seek to (re-)create unity and social cohesion, at least in the short run. If the state is not involved in providing essential services for citizens, it will be very difficult for it to establish legitimacy in their eyes. In addition, effective decentralisation appears to be closely tied to a capable, central authority committed to its implementation, which this study finds lacking in the Bosnian context.

7.3 Implications of research for policy and practice

This research has focused on the role of IOs in the peacebuilding process pointing to several problematic assumptions and questionable policy choices. As such, the findings of the research have implications for the work of IOs and the following recommendations are made with the view of improving their peacebuilding policy and practice.

7.3.1 Frame education policy development in terms of peacebuilding outcomes

Given the potential of education to contribute to peacebuilding, IOs involved in education policy development in post-conflict should clearly frame education reform goals in terms of both economic (human capital development) and social (social justice, social cohesion, reconciliation) outcomes. This would mean predicated reform on the robust conflict and political economy analysis as well as integrating into the policymaking process considerations of underlying conflict drivers, reconciliation, social cohesion, and other "deeply-rooted problems in education such as social and political exclusion, discrimination or linguistic repression" (Novelli et al., 2014).

7.3.2 Prepare IO staff engaged in peacebuilding carefully

The policymaking in the context of peacebuilding is concerned with addressing the root causes of conflict, preventing the relapse into violence, enhancing social cohesion, and

rebuilding trust in and legitimacy of governments (United Nations, 2012). It thus requires specific expertise and experience of IO staff involved. This research highlighted some common capacity gaps that should be addressed by IOs, including promoting understanding of the role of education in peacebuilding; building knowledge of how education policies and programmes can support peacebuilding goals; and strengthening skills to analyse how social, political, economic, and cultural features of a given setting may influence the outcomes of peacebuilding efforts. For example, the training on conflict-sensitive programming should become a requirement for deployment in peacebuilding contexts. As noted by Novelli et al. (2014), there is an opportunity to develop the capacity of education practitioners to situate their work within political economy contexts and to learn how to integrate education into peacebuilding. Furthermore, IOs engaged in peacebuilding should rethink how they define, mobilise, and deploy technical assistance, considering carefully the pros and cons of short-term deployments.

7.3.3 Utilise comparative advantage of different IOs in policymaking process

As this study has shown, IOs play different roles in the peacebuilding process based on their comparative technical advantage, their understanding of the goals of the reform, their mandates, and the position they have in the peacebuilding architecture. Some IOs are given political power to shape the policy agenda, develop key legislation and make policy decisions, while others support implementation and shape operationalisation of the reform agenda through strategies and programmes. It emerges from the study that the alignment of technical expertise of development sector IOs with the political power of security sector IOs should be brought together through a coordinated and coherent international response. Using their comparative advantages to jointly shape the policy underpinned by the peacebuilding theory of change, can considerably strengthen international actors' ability to support reform processes and achieve multiple objectives. Otherwise, as Galloway (2006) notes, the international community speaking with many voices will be easier to ignore.

7.3.4 Understand implications of policy choices in post-conflict

This research showed that some global education policy choices cannot be transported into post-conflict setting without proper consideration of the political economy of the context and a robust conflict sensitivity analysis. While educational decentralisation may promote efficiency and quality of the education system in some settings, this research indicates its potentially adverse effect on fragmenting and segregating education system, thus affecting the promotion of social cohesion, reconciliation, and sustainable peace through education. IOs should remain flexible to the changing post-conflict dynamics and

should avoid bringing with them preconceived ideas of what may or may not work in a given setting (O'Driscoll, 2018). Similarly, curriculum reforms that promote assimilation or integration may exacerbate tensions in the context where ethnic security is a primary conflict driver and where efforts to assimilate or integrate may be seen as a direct affront to that security. This complexity must be understood by IOs as part of the political economy analysis and dealt with through a carefully thought-out approach.

7.4 Recommendation for further research

This research suggests several areas for further research, which are presented next.

7.4.1 Role of national stakeholders in the post-conflict policymaking

While this study focused on the role of IOs in Bosnia's post-conflict education reform, it also highlighted the obstructionist role some national actors played in the process. Further research into the motivations, assumptions and actions of the national education policymakers in Bosnia's reform would substantially increase the understanding of how the present education system emerged and how it could potentially be reformed to achieve sustainable peace outcomes.

7.4.2 Grassroot level engagement in the post-conflict reform process

This study reflected on the role of a narrow set of national actors who directly interacted with IOs in the education reform process. It did not address the role of other stakeholders, such as teachers, parents, or community members. At the same time, several informants for this study highlighted positive experiences in working with those local actors, describing them as less politicised and more willing to work across ethnic boundaries. As recognised by Novelli et al. (2014), the failure of international actors to connect to the agency of local actors within civil society and sub-national contexts, limits or undermines the scope for capitalising on the knowledge and peacebuilding practices of local actors. Therefore, further research into IOs engagement with teachers, principals and schools in Bosnia would improve understanding of their potential to contribute to sustainable peacebuilding and could offer some new policy or programmatic choices to IOs.

7.4.3 Power of individual leadership in the policymaking

This study showed that the courage of IO leadership to engage in the difficult aspects of the post-conflict reform comes not only from the IO organisational mandate but from the personal interests and commitments of the IO staff. Further research on leadership and individual agency in policymaking would improve the understanding not only of how policies are made and implemented but also what type of leadership skills may need to be nurtured in IO staff serving in the complex post-conflict settings.

7.5 Contribution to knowledge

This research contributes to the understanding of the education policymaking in post-conflict settings and the specific role international actors play in that process. It offers new insights into how IOs make policy, what assumptions, values, and ideologies underpin their policy choices, how they understand the context within which they operate, and how they navigate tensions and contradictions both in their internal interactions and externally with national actors. While these issues have been studied widely in the development contexts, little literature on IO work in post-conflict exists.

As a case study, the research amplifies the knowledge of Bosnia's post-conflict education reform. Its methodological approach draws on interviews with IO policymakers who were not interviewed in other studies. As such, the study generates unique perspectives and critical reflections on IO actions in Bosnia from the key players in the process.

The conceptual framework for the research is drawn from the literature on peacebuilding, policy development and global education policy transfers. Several research findings contribute to these bodies of literature by either supporting or challenging existing theoretical and policy arguments.

Firstly, the research validates the argument that the current peacebuilding practice marginalises education thus reducing its potential to contribute to the peacebuilding process (Novelli & Smith, 2011). Through Bosnia's case the study demonstrates how failure to include education in the peace agreement and subsequently prioritise it in the immediate aftermath of the conflict can have adverse long-term effect on creation of sustainable peace.

Secondly, the research confirms the dominant role of the security sector IOs in the peacebuilding practice, which is in line with the criticism of the current peacebuilding architecture (Novelli et al., 2014). However, the research on Bosnia does not find that situation necessarily problematic from the perspective of peacebuilding. It shows that in Bosnia the security sector IOs acted to promote peacebuilding outcomes through the reform more readily than their development counterparts.

Thirdly, the research supports the literature findings that some national stakeholders, may actively engage in disrupting the peacebuilding process (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000, World Bank, 2011) and questions calls for less international presence in the post-conflict policymaking (De Coning, 2013, Mac Ginty, 2014, Tschirgi, 2004). The case of Bosnia highlights the need in some contexts for IOs to exercise stronger leadership in policy

development and implementation in order to counter peace-spoilers and advance the peacebuilding goals.

Fourthly, the research contributes to the debate on the appropriateness of international TA, in terms of its type, length and quality. The research confirms claims that the short-term TA is not suitable in dealing with complex issues of policy reform, capacity building or change management (Asia Development Bank, 2007). The study also finds that IOs generally fail to equip their staff with necessary knowledge and skills to engage in education policymaking from the perspective of peacebuilding.

Lastly, the research contributes to an argument that where decentralisation has been part of the post-conflict process, the local democracy may be more vulnerable to political capture and can exacerbate cleavages between the groups (World Bank, 2011). It therefore suggests that educational decentralisation may be problematic from the perspective of peacebuilding and calls for a closer examination of policy choices by the IOs participating in peacebuilding.

7.6 Reflections on my research journey

This research journey began in 2013, but the preoccupation with the subject matter and the desire to research it date back at least a decade ago when I first became aware of the troubling impact DPA-imposed decentralised governance had on reconciliation and sustainable peace in Bosnia. With its politicised and segregated structure, the education system was the clearest expression of things going wrong, and I became deeply concerned for the future of young Bosnians who are being educated in that system, my nephew and niece included.

Consequently, I started my research journey by exploring education decentralisation and its effects on social cohesion in post-conflict setting. Through my Critical Analytical Study (CAS), I found an uneven record of success – decentralisation was as likely to achieve political reorganization which is more democratic and more inclusive of all segments of society, as it was to deepen cleavages between groups and have a detrimental effect on long-term peace. Through CAS I also discovered the problematic role of IOs in transporting global reform models, such as decentralisation, into post-conflict settings. The study highlighted how in their policymaking IOs are often oblivious to the specific political, social, and cultural dynamics of individual country contexts and inattentive to the need for any deeper conflict and political economy analysis.

Those findings truly hit home! After all, I was working for one of those IOs, and I was seeing myself and my colleagues in those research conclusions. Coincidentally, in 2015, I moved to Palestine as UNICEF's Chief of Education and began working on the

education reform process there. I began practicing what I was researching, and the issues could not get more relevant or personal for me.

This research deepened my knowledge about peacebuilding, international organisations, global policy transfers, policymaking and decentralisation. It enriched me as a professional, teaching me rigorous research practice, which I will use in my work. The research made me critically reflect on the role of international development actors, my own organisation, UNICEF, and my own actions as an IO policymaker. It encouraged me to question underlying assumptions and ideologies behind our actions and work to change them when they are not in service of social justice and peace. This research reconfirmed to me that the school may be the single most transformative institution that can touch every citizen when it is equitable, of good quality and relevant and it strengthened my commitment to advocate for and support efforts to bring that kind of education to all children, especially those affected by conflict.

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Appendices

Annex 1: Interview Participants and their key characteristics

Informants by International Organisations, Role, and Seniority

- COE Middle Level Professional Staff
- EC Senior Consultant
- EC Senior Consultant
- OSCE Senior Staff
- OSCE Senior Consultant
- UNESCO Senior Consultant
- UNESCO Middle Level Professional Staff
- UNICEF Middle Level Professional Staff

Length of tenure in the Country

Table 6: Informants' tenure in BH

	Present during post-conflict reconstruction 1995-2000	Present during the 5 years of reform 2001-2006
Informant 1		X
Informant 2	X	X
Informant 3		X
Informant 4	X	X
Informant 5	X	X
Informant 6		X
Informant 7		X
Informant 8		X

Annex 2: Interview Questions

Basic information

1. How long have you been working for (name of the organization) in Bosnia?
2. What was your role in (name of the organization)?
3. Was this your first assignment in a post-conflict setting? Have you worked in post-conflict settings and on similar education reform agenda since?

Policy Development Process

4. What was your specific role in the education reform process?
5. Who were your international counterparts?
6. Who drove the reform – IC or national counterparts?
7. Within IC community - who led discussions, organised meetings and coordinated with local stakeholders? Who drafted key documents?
8. How did you experience the role of national counterparts in the reform process?
9. What were the key obstacles to ensuring that education system decentralised along ethnic lines does no harm to social cohesion/reconciliation?
10. What measures have been considered to mitigate negative effects of three education systems on social cohesion and reconciliation?
11. Have there been disagreements or divergence in approaches/views between the IOs on how best to minimize negative effects of the decentralised system (especially curriculum)?
12. If so, what were the key disagreements?
13. Was some form of centralisation ever considered as an alternative and if so, by whom and with what arguments?

Reflections

14. Knowing what you know now, would you have supported a different set of measures in the reform in Bosnia or other similar contexts?
15. What are your views on the potential of education to promote peace and reconciliation in post conflict settings?

Annex 3: Participant Information Sheet

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Study title Global Governance and Educational Decentralisation in Post-conflict Bosnia: Power and participation in policy development and their effects on sustainable peace building

Invitation You are invited to participate in a research study on the role international organizations in developing education decentralisation policy in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

What is the purpose of the study? Using the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the proposed research will examine the role of international actors in promoting education policies that may contribute to fostering social cohesion and peacebuilding in post-conflict settings. The research attempts to answer the following question: Why was education decentralisation promoted by international education development actors in post-conflict Bosnia? The two sub-questions will examine what have been the historical, ideological, and political underpinnings of the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education that laid ground to education decentralisation in Bosnia, and what has been the role of international actors in development of the policy. This will be a qualitative research study. I will first conduct a desk-review of relevant documents and then conduct between 15-20 interviews with selected international actors involved in education decentralisation reform to gain insights into their assumptions and justifications of specific policies they were recommending, as well as to examine and understand the dynamics of policymaking processes that took place from 2002-2003.

The research will take place between September 2014 and June 2016.

Why have I been invited to participate? You are invited to participate as someone who has a great deal to share about the process of developing the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in Bosnia that took place between 2002 and 2003 as well as the overall familiarity with the education reform process in Bosnia following the war.

Do I have to take part? Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part? If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to participate in a phone or Skype interview or through detailed written response. The

interview will take approximately 45 min to 1 hour, depending on your responses. The interview will be audio-taped.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part? While your name and the name of your organization will be completely anonymized, and your title altered into generic Senior or Junior staff in the final report, there is a chance that your identity could be inferred by other IO staff, based on your organizations' presence in Bosnia at the time. It is unlikely that your identity would be inferred by members of the general public.

What are the possible benefits of taking part? There are no immediate or expected benefits of the study.

Will my information in this study be kept confidential? All records of this study will be kept private and confidential. Research records will be kept securely by the researcher; only the researcher will have access to the records. Tape recordings of the interview(s) will also be kept securely, accessible only to the researcher. Tapes will be destroyed after successful transcription. Your name will not be included in the final study report.

What should I do if I want to take part? Should you decide to take part, please send me, Maida Pasic, a confirmation by email at: m_pasic@hotmail.com.

What will happen to the results of the research study? The results of the research will be used in my EdD dissertation. I will send you a copy of the published research at your request.

Who is organising and funding the research? I am conducting the research as a student at University of Sussex, School of Education and Social Work. This is a self-funded research.

Who has approved this study? The research has been approved by the Social Sciences & Arts Cross-Schools Research Ethics Committee (C-REC).

Contact for Further Information If you have questions, you are encouraged to contact me by email at m_pasic@hotmail.com, or by phone at: 917-346-2958. If you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted, please contact my advisor Dr. Mario Novelli by email at m.novelli@sussex.ac.uk, or by phone at: 44 1273 678639.

Thank you.

Date_____

Annex 4: Consent Form**CONSENT FORM FOR PROJECT PARTICIPANTS**

PROJECT TITLE: **GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AND EDUCATIONAL DECENTRALISATION IN POST-
CONFLICT BOSNIA: POWER IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND THEIR EFFECTS ON
SUSTAINABLE PEACE BUILDING**

I agree to take part in the above University of Sussex research project. I have had the project explained to me and I have read and understood the Information Sheet, which I may keep for records. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

- Be interviewed by the researcher
- Allow the interview to be audio taped
- Make myself available for a further interview should that be required

I understand that any information I provide is confidential and that the following steps will be taken by the researcher to prevent my identity from being made public:

- My name will be anonymised
- My job title will be altered to indicate generic positions within the organization (Senior or Junior staff)

I understand that I will be given a transcript of data concerning me for my approval before being included in the write up of the research.

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I understand that while in the final study report my name will be anonymised and my title altered to indicate generic positions within the organization there is a chance that my identity could be inferred based on my organisation's presence in Bosnia at the time and my role in the reform process. Should I not wish to take that risk, I can withdraw at any stage of the project.

I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this research study. I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Name: _____

Signature _____

Date: _____

Annex 5: Key policy documents reviewed

Agreement on the Removal of Objectionable Material from Textbooks and Implementation Agreement (1999)

In this agreement signed by Minister/Deputy Minister of Education/Federation and Minister of Education of Republika Srpska, parties agreed that objectionable material, as identified by the appointed Expert Teams and further decided upon by the process of arbitration of the Independent International Commission, will be either removed or annotated as a necessary and desirable interim step in achieving an unbiased educational system.

Inter-ministerial Education Declaration and Agreement aimed at harmonizing the segregated education systems (2000)

The Agreement signed by the Minister/Deputy Minister of Education/Federation and Minister of Education/Republika Srpska commit, among other things, to stopping segregation of schools in the parallel education system, greater coordination between entities, promote measures to teach both scripts Cyrillic and Latin and shared literary and cultural heritage of three communities.

Education Reform Strategy: Message to the People of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2002)

This document was produced by OSCE office and presented at the PIC meeting in November 2002. It emphasized that the overriding objective of the reform is to depoliticise education, while creating the conditions that will ensure equal access to a high-quality, modern education throughout BH. It outlines five key priorities of the education reform in Bosnia.

The Interim Agreement on Accommodation of Specific Needs and Rights of Returnee Children (2003)

The agreement signed by entity Ministers, aims to provide necessary conditions for increased enrolment of returnee children to schools throughout BH, particularly in places where returnees are minority group. The agreement provides for conditions for employment of returnee teachers and regulates school boards composition to reflect local ethnic composition. In addition, it enables parents to choose ethnic-related group of National Subjects for their children. (Ministry of Civil Affairs BH, 2004)

Shared Modernisation Strategy for Primary and General Secondary Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, White Paper, Educational Authorities in BH, October 2003.

The paper put the emphasis on technical issues of modernising education in Bosnia such as curriculum development, teacher training and standard-setting for evaluation and monitoring. More political issues, like the implications of refugee return for education, were not explicitly mentioned. The paper aimed to set the stage for the development of the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education.

Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in Bosnia Herzegovina, Official Bulletin of BH 18/03, 2003.

The Framework Law confirmed respect for human rights (such as the rights of the child to education, freedom of religion, freedom of movement), which are also safeguarded by international conventions as basic principles in education. It also incorporated two major reforms demanded by international actors – the removal of offensive content in textbooks (Art. 10), and a harmonisation of curricula (Art. 7). The law imposed a single system of certificates and diplomas, thus facilitating exchange between schools within the country, which is particularly important to returnee children. It also provided for a common core curriculum for all schools. The Framework Law also clarified the roles and rights of the different stakeholders (the two national institutions, the Standards Assessment Agency and the Curriculum Agency, authorities at entity and cantonal level, schools, teachers, parents and pupils). It was also decided that the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BH should monitor and supervise its implementation (Art. 56).

Annex 6: Secondary Data Used in the study (selected examples)

I Articles, IO Reports

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Annex 7: Details of IO engagement in the education sector in Bosnia

Office of the High Representative (OHR)

The OHR and the position of the High Representative (HR) was created in December 1995 to oversee the civilian implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA). At the start of the peace process, the HR's role was to bring together representatives of the wartime parties, establish the rule of law, and ensure that the institutions created at the state and entity levels function effectively and in a responsible manner (OHR, 2019).

The OHR works under the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) the international body guiding the implementation of the peace agreement. At the 1997 Bonn PIC Conference, the PIC gave authority to the High Representative to remove from office public officials who violate legal commitments and the Dayton Peace Agreement, and to impose laws as he sees fit if Bosnia and Herzegovina's legislative bodies fail to do so (ibid.). The official governing principle of the OHR is the concept of domestic responsibility, which calls on the officials and citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina to take responsibility for the peace process and the problems that their country faces (ibid).

In the years immediately following the conflict OHR focused primarily on security and the elections-related DPA implementation. However, at the same Bonn PIC conference in 1997, OHR was requested to develop education programme that would "contribute to tolerance and stability within a multi-ethnic Bosnia" (Perry, 2003, p. 47) and a year later, PIC requested that the two entity authorities develop curriculum that promotes tolerance and stability. This prompted greater OHR engagement in education.

Its early involvement in education, however, quickly became controversial. In 1998, supported by UNESCO, OHR conducted a review of textbooks in Sarajevo canton to identify any controversial content as a way of preparing for the return of non-Bosniak students to cantonal schools. The review, which happened mostly behind the closed doors, discovered some problematic content and recommended its removal. These proposals were leaked to the media, causing an uproar in local public who found the non-transparent review process problematic. Recommendations were eventually dismissed (Fisher, 2006, Perry, 2003) and the reputation of the Office somewhat tarnished.

Despite this initial setback, from 1998-2002 OHR continued to play a coordination and knowledge-brokering role between entity ministries and IOs, convening several

conferences and meetings all aimed at stimulating education reform processes. OHR's effort brought about signing of several inter-entity agreements that committed local ministers to the harmonisation of the curriculum.¹⁸ OHR also played a role in the implementation of some legislation and policies through the application of Bonn powers given to HR by the PIC.¹⁹

Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

The OSCE established office in Bosnia immediately after the conflict to monitor the implementation of the first post-war elections. The OSCE activities in those early years focused primarily on training election monitors as well as election education with local communities (Interview 5). In 1998 the organisation conducted its first systematic work in education by commissioning a study of the education system in Bosnia which concluded that "de facto ethnically based segregation was part of the education system" (OSCE, 2001, p. 7). Between 1998 and 2002, OSCE conducted monitoring of education activities as they related to the implantation of the various agreements on harmonisation of the curriculum mentioned earlier.

Despite its relative lack of experience and expertise in education sector but thanks to its large field presence and political decision by the OHR, in July 2002, the OSCE was given the mandate for education coordination and reform. In the period from 2002-2006, the OSCE lead a comprehensive effort to reform the education sector in Bosnia which resulted, most notably, in the adoption of the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education. At the time of the writing of this study, the OSCE continues to lead education related work of the international community in Bosnia.

European Commission Technical Assistance to Education Reform (EC-TAER)

Through its TAER project, the EC supported several key pre-reform processes including development of the Shared Modernisation Strategy for Education (SMS), support to reform of Higher Education as well as reform of public administration. The most notable of all was the EC's three-year effort (2000-2003) to develop the SMS which articulated objectives and goals of the education reform in the areas of education content (curriculum, certification, standards and assessment); capacity (teacher training and management); institutional development and legislation and finance. The strategy,

¹⁸ These included: July 1999 Mostar "Agreement on the Removal of Objectionable Material from Textbooks"; August 1999 Banja Luka "Implementation Agreement" and May 2000 Inter-ministerial Education Declaration and Agreement aimed at harmonizing the segregated education systems

¹⁹ In 1997, at the PIC meeting held in Bonn, OHR was given authority to: 1. adopt binding decisions when local parties seem unable or unwilling to act; and 2. remove from office public officials who violate legal commitments or, in general, the DPA. These were called Bonn Powers and were later on used by some HRs in solving education reform issues.

developed through the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, formed the basis from which the First Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education was developed. The SMS denoted the intent not only to unify and harmonize the local education players but also the IOs who were supporting the reform. The Strategy received the formal (a signed agreement) and public support of both Entity Ministers of Education, and the informal support of Cantonal Ministers.

The EC has also been promoting the introduction of EU policy in education, supporting the implementation of the Bologna Process and Lisbon Convention in Higher Education, and the Copenhagen Process in vocational education and training (Magill, 2010, p. 25). The EC, much to the dismay of the international and local partners stopped the funding of the EC-TAER in 2002.

The Council of Europe (COE)

The Council of Europe, with a local office, but largely operating from its Education Department in Strasbourg, has been involved in education reform working in coordination with the OHR and EC on various aspects of legislative and institutional strengthening as well as on citizenship and human rights education. With the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the COE worked to draft the primary and secondary framework law as well as the higher education law. It helped set up the Conference of Education Ministers as well as the Rectors conference. The Council has developed materials with an INGO, CIVITAS for the mandatory subject, "Human Rights and Civic Education". It co-chaired the Higher Education CB, and provided a temporary Secretariat until the end of 2000, when that acting role was taken over by EC-TAER. The COE remains active player in education field in Bosnia until the writing of this study.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

With its global mandate to protect the rights of every child to education, UNICEF was a natural partner in the education reform process. The agency employed education staff from the end of the war and has remained involved in the education sector since then, in particular in the areas of early childhood education, quality through Child Friendly Schools (CFS) and inclusive education. In the period examined in this study (1999-2006), UNICEF was the co-chair with EU of the working group on preschool, inclusive education and quality in education convened under EC-TACER SMS project (Interviewee 4). At the field level, UNICEF worked in 70 schools to introduce and implement quality child-centred education and child-friendly environments from kindergarten to 4th grade. UNICEF also worked on the introduction and implementation of a sustainable quality inclusive education for children with mild mental and physical

disabilities within the regular kindergarten, first and secondary school grade primary school classes in 16 school districts in Bosnia (OSCE 2002a, p. 61).

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)

UNESCO's engagement in the reform processes in Bosnia started in 1998, when the organisation played crucial role in the first curriculum review for Sarajevo canton (see section on OHR). Later, UNESCO assumed a substantial role in the EC-TAER SMS project, concentrating on issues of general curriculum reform. Securing funding for its Bosnia operations, however, became difficult, forcing the organisation to close its education programme in 2003. Following the closure, UNESCO sponsored a "farewell project" for Bosnia that focused on the training of curriculum developers and decision makers to develop curriculum framework. The project was considered a success in creating a critical mass of curriculum specialists in the country that was thought to be instrumental for the successful development and implementation of a modern curriculum framework in Bosnia and modern syllabuses, based on commonly-accepted quality standards (UNESCO IBE 2005). While UNESCO holds a UN Mandate for education and has historically played the role of technical advisor on education reforms in many countries, its funding predicaments forced them to play less prominent role in the education reform in Bosnia.

The World Bank (WB)

The World Bank played the most prominent role in the education sector in the aftermath of the conflict when it provided support to infrastructure rebuilding and rehabilitation. Through its four-year (2000-2004) Education Development Project, the World Bank mobilised the professional capacity of teachers to improve the teaching and learning processes in BH schools; promoted the efficient and equitable use of scarce public resources for education in BH and promoted professional cooperation and coordination in education across the three main constituent groups (World Bank, 2000). Part of the Project also supported the establishment of an Inter-Entity Standards Assessment Agency, which was finally established in October 2001, whose purpose was to assess the achievement of students in schools in BH against European standards.

In 1999, World Bank with COE conducted an Education Governance and Finance Review providing framework and recommendations for a preliminary medium-term education strategy. The reviewed argued for the creation of "intermediary institutions" and shared management mechanisms that will allow all three constituent groups in BH to cooperate and coordinate their efforts on a professional basis in education (World Bank, 2000). The strategy focused on technical aspects of the reform as a way of

mitigating the risks of reform process being hijacked by political issues. World Bank also supported decentralisation of administrative and political control over educational inputs (teachers, books, curriculum, financing, etc.) to schools or municipalities.